DESIDERIVS.

THE SOVLES DESIRE,

AND THE HOPE OF HEAVEN.

A most Godly, Religious, and delectable Dialogue, teaching the true and ready way, by which we may attaine to the perfect Loue of GOD.

LONDON

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A BRIEFE MO
rall of this whole booke.

THis booke (by way of a continuall Allegorie) ſheweth, how a godly man, whome the Author calles *Deſire*, in the manner of a pilgrime, by direction of his Paſtor or Preacher, whom he termeth a Shepheard, beginning at the Feare of God, which he fitly calleth the Pallace of Humility, paſſeth from one vertue to another, yet not without the aſſault of many vices, till at the laſt hee attaines to the loue of God, and to the Fruition of him.

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A MOST GODLY, RELIgious, and delectable Dialogue teaching the true and readie way by which wee may attaine to the perfect loue of God.

CHAP. I.

Desire goeth on Pilgrimage.

THere liued sometimes in a vast and solitary desert, a holy and Religious Father, whose chiefest care, and daily exercise, was with fasting, watching, and praying, continually to serue God. This holy Father was moued on a time with a zealous and harty Desire, to find out the true and ready way (if possibly hee could) to true wisedome, and the loue of God. Therfore he resolued with himselfe to trauaile ouer the whole world, if happely he could find a Master able to instruct and direct him herein. With this resolution he

departed from his house, and then first began his determined iourney. Now after this holy Father, (whom wee will call, Desiderius or Desire) had measured the desert, with a long and wearisome trauaile, he first encountred a reuerend old shepheard: who fed his flocke, in a pleasant greene meadow, beautified with variety of sweet smelling flowers: with the sight of whom, being greatly comforted: hauing long trauailed, and yet met with no man, hee saluted him in maner following. My louing Brother, now thanked be God who hath directed mee to meet you here. To whom the shepheard returned answere: I likewise am glad of this our meeting: tell me what seeke you in this solitary desert? I seeke quoth Desire, a certaine Knight who as I vnderstand is trauailed this way.

Chap. II.

He is instructed by prelates and spirituall Pastors.

This Pilgrim, and this pastor, thus met together, Desire attentiuely noted with admiration, the great care, and diligence, which this good shepheard vsed, towards the flocke committed to his charge, first hee had in his hand a rodde, or wande: on his right side, there hung a scrip or bagge: on his feete, hee wore wooden pattens, his garment was a long coat: on his left side, at his girdle, there hung a little horne,

horne, and on his right side, an other some what greater, two great Dogges followed him on each side, and fast by, was his homely cottage, fenced and compassed about with bushes, and thornes. The shepheard, perceauing how attentiuely Desire beheld and noted him, asked of him, the cause therof: and if he neuer had seene a shepheard before? De. Truely Brother, I haue oft seene many, but neuer one so wel prouided as you selfe, wherefore pardon mee, and if it bee not troublesome to you, answere mee to that I shall aske of you. Shep. You shall not bee offensiue to mee, if your demaunds, be but such as I may answere. De. Wherefore doe you carry this staffe in your hand? Shep. I meruaile not a little, why you aske mee that, for considering, your selfe are a shepheard, as I am, how can you bee ignorant of the vse of it? I vse this staffe, both for my ayde, and stay, that going vp and down, with my sheepe, I stumble not and fall: and also, therewith I order and rule my flocke, directing them therewith, to keepe their right way, and prohibiting them to wander and stray, but to keepe together, not allowing each one to go seuerall wayes: for if any one chance to seuer from my flocke, or to follow after any other, then my selfe, with this staffe, I inforce him and driue him, vntill

he vnite himselfe againe to his fellowes. De. What doe you carry in this scrip that you weare? Shep. Foure things: A tinder bore to strike fire, wherwith in cold winter I may warme my selfe, and dresse such meate as serueth my fellowes, and me, also bread, onyons, a bore of oyntment, and salt, whereof especially I oft giue my sheep. De. Why do you weare woden pattens on your feet? Shep. To keepe me warme in winter, when it is Frost, and Snow: for if I should weare more costly, or curious, they would soone be worne out with much going about. De. What signifieth this long garment that you weare? Shep. This is my habit, without which no man would know mee to bee a shepheard. De. Whereof is this garment made? Shep. Of sheepe skinnes. De. Might it not bee made of Wolues or other beasts skins? Shep. No for my sheepe would easily find that by the smell, and so would presently fly away from me, but seeing me clad in their owne skinnes; they loue and follow mee continually. De. What haue you in the horne that hangeth on your left side? Shep. An oyntment, wherewith I dresse my sheepe that bee infected with the scabbe. De. What is the bigger, that hangeth on the right side? Shep. A marking stone, whereby I know them from other mens sheepe. De. For what

vse doe you kéep those dogs? Shep. They bark in the night, and kéep away the wolues, wherby both my shéepe be in moze safety, and I my selfe take my rest moze quietly. De. Why are you so carefull ouer this your charge? She. Because I haue a kind and bountifull Master, who hath promised mee a great reward, although I doe it not in regard of reward, but rather for the loue I beare to him.

Chap. III.

Of the same Argument.

Desire now grew into great admiration with himselfe, and was greatly pleased, hearing that this shepheard did vndertake this charge for loue, and said to him. My brother, considering you conuerse for the most part in these pleasant fields, can you certifie me of a certaine Knight which wandreth solitarily, vp and downe alone? by reason that beeing expelled his possession by his owne subiects, he is constrained to seeke some place of abode where hee may rest and settle himselfe. Shep. What is the name of this Knight, you enquire after? De. He is called, the Loue of God. She. I know right well the place of his abode. And if thou hadst experience to kéepe my flocke as I haue, and wert euery way sufficient for such a charge. I would my selfe bring thee to him, that thou mightest not as heretofore wan-

der

der vp and downe to seeke him, he ma..eth shepheards, and willingly conuerseth with them. And although he be a noble, and renowmed Knight, yet is hee notwithstanding the son of a shepheard. But perceiuing thee, to bee a man of a weake, and tender constitution, and vnfit of thy selfe, to vndertake the charge of my flocke, not able to follow them through this solitary desert, I thinke it meete, thou shouldest assay another iourney. De. What other iourney doe you aduise me to take? Shep. First must you passe through this solitary desert, and not farre hence, shall you finde a faire and stately Pallace: This Pallace is inhabited onely with Virgins, of whome you shall learne the abode of this Knight: for such is the courtesie, affability, and honest cariage of him, that willingly, he conuerseth with all, that seek after him. This discourse of the shepheard, pleased Desire not a little, and the rather, being put in hope, by him to find out the Loue of God. Who said to him, teach me, I pray you the ready way that I must take least that perhaps through ignorance, I happe to goe awry. Shep. I may not my selfe forsake my flock, yet will I appoint thee a conuenient companion in this thy iourney, who accompanying thee, by the assistance of God, thou shalt not easily goe out of thy way: take here with thee this my

dogge

my ... re. De. What is hisn ame? Shep. Good will. De. Farewell my Brother. Shep. And you also, to whome I wish a prosperous iourney.

Chap. IIII.

Of the House of Humility.

HEre Desire leauing the shepheard vndertooke his iourney, accompanied with his dog; running by his side: which was no little comfort to him on the way, and now hauing trauailed, many daies and nights, he entred on a Sunday, into a most pleasant greene meddow, seated in a dry and rocky soile, wherat Desire meruailed not a little, to see so pleasant, and so greene a meddow, lying in so stony and so barren a place, ouer growne about, with bushes, and thornes. And entring farther in, he found there builte, a stately, faire Pallace. the sight whereof, pleased him much. But comming neare he found the gates shut, and a certain Virgin standing without, modest as to him seemed, both in her attire, and behauiour: who at the sight of Desires dogge, began to bee afraid. Whome Desire comforted, and bid her not to feare, assuring her, his dogge would not hurt her. And meruailing, to see her stand thus alone without, hee demanded of her, why shee stood there, who answered him, that shee expected the opening

of

of the gates to goe in. Then demanding farther her name of her, she answered saying; I am called Vaine-glory. Now Desire hauing long expected the opening of the gates, and perceiuing his attendance to bee all in vaine, beganne to call, and knocke at the gate with a hammer, banging therat, called Longanimity and presently came forth an ancient reuerende man, who opened the gate. This man was called the Feare of God, who was both porter and keeper of all this Pallace, whom Desire seeing, and finding a graue and wise reuerend man, was greatly cheared in beholding him, and after due reuerence done to him, spake to him in manner following. God sir (quoth he,) my comming hither, is to seeke out a Knight, called the Loue of God. Who as I am told, is trauelled through this desert, and hath his abode now in this Pallace, wherefore I humbly desire of you to know if hee bee here within or no. At this demaund of his, the porter reioyced, for he loued the Loue of God, euē as his own brother, and asked of him, why he sought after this Knight. De. I seeke him not onely because I am greatly delighted with him but also because it is very behouefull for me to find him: Feare of God. What: haue you any thing so secret, that you dare not reueale it: De. Truely Sir, onely I desire his com-

company and conuersation, and with I were his seruant to attend on him, coueting nothing more then such a Master and instructer, for in all this country, I cannot find a Master answerable to my mind, although many haue bin willing to entertaine me. But I haue learned frō many, that the Loue of God, is a most noble, gen'le, and bountifull Master: who in that he is rich, often bestoweth great p'ferments on his seruants. Feare of God. True it is he passed this way accōpanied but with few, who at this present is not within, but haue patience a while, & I will call a Virgin to you, who is able to direct you, where you shall find him out.

CHAP. V.

How Vaine-glory watcheth at the gate.

MEane time, while Desire ioyfully expected the comming of the Porter, and Virgin hee spake of, & not waighting long, there came to him a modest & seemly Virgin, who saluting him curteously, was in like maner resaluted again, of whom Desire craued her name, who answered, my name is called Nihili-pensio, because I entermeddle not in superfluous and vnnecessary things, and demanding farther the name of the Pallace, shee tolde him it was the house of Humility, because within, there dwelt many Virgins, who liued vnder the obedience and rule of humility: hee againe asked:

what

what maide is that which standeth without the gate, her name quoth she, is called Vain-glory who sitteth continually at this gate vntill it be opened and then, if the porter be negligent, and looke not strictly to his office, (but leaue open the gates) shee presently entreth. Why do you not admit her in, saith Desire, considering both in speech, habit, and gesture, she seemeth modest vertuous, and honest. You know not (quoth the Virgin) her cõditions, I perceiue: For I assure you shee is a most dangerous beast, for how much the more modest, & religious she séemeth by her externall cariage, so much I hold her, to be more dãgerous. What, saith Desire, doth she at any time hurt you? yea truly said the Virgin, so farre as lyeth in her power: her father is a wicked man, called Selfe-Loue, her mother as ill, called Selfe Estimation, neither haue we three greater enemies in al the world, & farther they are enemies to ỹ Loue of God, a Knight, who is master of this Pallace, in which wee liue. And that you may farther know, what hurt Vaine-glory doth vs: I say so soone as she entreth in, shee is so gluttenous, and rauening, that first she goeth into our Orchards, and there deuoureth and eateth vp all our fruit, which is both faire and good, which is the fruite we haue to liue with, neither haue wee more then one tree of it, which carrieth so little, that

hardly

hardly are we sustayned ther with, which being taken away from vs, by Vaine-glory, wee remaine so poore, that nothing is left vs. And yet worse then this, after shee is once come in, shee is so crafty, and deceitefull, that wee cannot expell her, labor we neuer so much, vntill wee call the assistance of our Mother, at whose onely sight, she runneth away: wherefore we thinke it good, not to admitte her at all, which to preuent, wee purposely keepe this Porter continually at our gate, who is a seuere and sterne man, and still shutteth the gate, that shee cannot enter: whome wee intreate to be circumspect, that when hee admitteth any, hee through negligence, leaue not open the gate. Desire stood amased, at the discourse of this Virgin, and replyed, considering shee is so dangerous an enemy to you, you cannot bee too carefull, to keepe her out of your house.

CHAP. VI.

By what meanes, we may attaine to Humility.

DEsire continuing his speech with this virgin, asked her who brought her into that goodly and Religious Pallace, adorned, and shining, with so rare vertues. Two Virgins (quoth she) guided me hither, whereof the

the one is called, Contempt of the world, a Virgin endued with singular vertues, the other called Contempt of her selfe, exceeding the first by many degrees. These two virgins leading mee in, entreated our Mother and Mistris to receaue me, which notwithstãding shee had not done, but for the loue of a certaine Knight, which met vs in our iourney, & came in heere with vs, who bestowed on me this habite I weare, and admitted mee into the society of his Virgins, and had it not beeen graunted vs by speciall grace, that, that Knight had entred in hither with vs, I had neuer bin receaued, but had lost my labour. Des. What is the name of the Knight you speake of? Virg. The Loue of God. It pleased Desire much, that the Loue of God was of that account, that so many & so great things were done onely for his sake, & now he began more earnestly to Desire his presence, and sayd. De. Deare sister, tell mee what were the parents of these two Virgins, which brought you hither, for it auaileth much to the honesty & reputation of a man to be borne of honest and vertuous parents, for commonly the tree taketh the vertue from the roote. Vir. I know right well their parents names, their father is one of chiefest authority in our Princes palace, who is caled, To know: also I know as well their grand-father, whose

name

name is To Consider, who is a wise & discreet man, and one that dischargeth his office duelie: he married a wife called Wisedom. De. Had the Knight when hee met you no man in his company? Vir. Yes he had a boy with him whom he loueth dearely, this boy is called the Loue of our neighbour. De Can you direct me whether this knight is gone? Vir. I could direct you, but let vs goe in, and I will bring you to those that can instruct you certainely: but tel me I pray you, why doe you carry this great dogge with you? De. He was giuen vnto me by an other, for I my selfe had first but a little whelpe, which I bredde vp in my chamber, vntil I mette a certaine shepheard that bestowed his bigger dogge on me, to accompanie mee through this vast and solitary desert, in which (as I was told) lurcd many hurtfull serpents, & dangerous wild beasts, from which I might be defended by the meanes of this dogge. Vir. What is the dogs name? De. Good will. Virgin. The dogge surely is a very good dogge, if you know how to keepe him and assure your selfe, so long as you haue him, he will suffer no ill to befall vnto you, neither needs you to feare, to stray out of your way. De. But tell me I pray you? of whome may I enquire, where I may find this Knight that I seeke after? Vir. Truely brother he

dwelleth

dwelleth farr hence, and thou hast a long iourney to goe through this desert, before thou canst come to the place of his abode: thou must trauell at the least seauen dayes iourney, for there be seauen Pallaces, seated in this desert, neyther is there any other way to passe, but this: yet for the loue of the Loue of God, considering, I see thee so desirous of him, I will direct thee a short way to go, by the which thou shalt sooner come where he is, wherefore, it is requisite that thou follow my aduise. Desire hearing what she said, reioyced greatly, but especially, because shee saide, shee would doe it for the Loue of God, and saide to her. De. I will doe, what ere you bid me, so I may finde the Loue of God. Vir. Here within this desert, there are eight Pallaces, whereof, this which is the house of Humility, is the first, the second, is of Iustice, the third, is of Wisedome, the fourth, of Fortitude, the fift, of Temperance, the sixt, of Faith, the seauenth, of Hope, the eight, of Charity: in this last of Charity, remaineth the Loue of God, & there dischargeth the office of a porter. This whole iourney, thou must vndertake, if thou wilt bee sure to go the right way, but as I saide I will teach thee a shorter way, by which thou mayest sooner come to him: yet notwithstanding it is of necessity, that thou abide a time heere in this Pallace, that thou

maist

raieſt learne, marke and remember, all our or-
ers, and be acquainted with our Miſtris, & all
ier daughters, and learne, and remember their
names, behauiours, and liues. Moreouer thou
muſt diligently note, all things in this Caſtle,
and carry to the Loue of God Certaine rules
of ours, for the great loue he beareth to this our
Caſtle before others, then will he without de-
lay, moſt willingly receiue thee, the rather, if
thou bring letters of commendation from our
Miſtris. De. What is the reaſon, the Loue
of God ſhould ſo preferre you? conſidering (as
me ſeemeth) you are the pooreſt, meaneſt, and
feweſt in number. Vir. This was the firſt
Caſtle that was founded in this Deſert, and all
the other are depending on this, beſides our
chiefeſt founder & gouernor, the builder, & work
man of this Caſtle, maketh his abode and
dwelling amongſt vs: and although he walke
vp and down this deſert, to viſite and kéep in or-
der the other Caſtles, yet will hee not permit
himſelfe to be otherwiſe called then a childe of
this Caſtle, and firſt of all, we gaue him an ha-
bit. Deſire was ſo much delighted with the diſ-
courſe of this virgin, that he felt his heart infla-
med with loue, for he noted her words wel, and
ſaide, hee deſired nothing more, then to ſpend
long time in this place, & with great diligence
to note and mark their orders. Then the virgin

taking him by the hand said, now let vs goe in.

CHAP. VII.

The purpose or intent of Humility, and her talke with Desire.

The building of this house much pleased Desire, and he admired the beauty therof, considering it was plain without any counterfeit: for neyther was it built high, nor yet set foorth with any imagery or painting; but low & conuenient, not founded vpon sand, but on a firme rocke. After Desire had a time attended his deuotions in the oratory, the virgin brought him to the chamber of their Mistris or mother, who receiued him curteously, seeing him vertuous, and deuoted to Gods seruice, & making him sit, said vnto him; what cause my son hath brought thée amongst vs, considering wee are so poore, so meane, & such abiects? De. Lady mother, I séeke after a knight, called the Loue of God, and as I am instructed, I cannot find him, except I make my abode here some time with you: wherfore (if it be not troublesome to you) I desire to liue vnder your obedience, and gouernment. Hum. Your desire and purpose pleaseth me wel, but first consider, and weigh with your self, what it is that you goe about to vndertake, least hauing once entred, you repent you of your purpose. De. I beséech God assist me with his grace and helpe, that I may perse-

uer

uer in vertue and all goodnes. Hum. I wish the same, & pray to God, to accomplish this good worke which he hath begun in thée. But farther it is requisit, that thou thy selfe endeauour all that in thée lieth, that God may prosper this thy good purpose. De. What think you néedfull for me to doe? Hum. My Son, I will tell thée. If thy desire be to remaine here amongst vs, and not to bee expelled from hence by my Virgins; thou must take my yongest daughter which brought thée in hither, who is called Nihili-pensio, that is contempt of all vnnecessary cares, & her thou must obey as thy Gouernesse or mistris, to whom, purposly wehaue committed the charge, to entertain strangers, & be the directrix of nouices, & whosoeuer refuse to be obediēt to her, neuer persuer in that they vndertake. De. Most willingly I admit her and receiue her my gouernesse, and desire to know of you Lady mother, your name, stocke, conditions and degrée, and how you come to be mother ouer these virgins? For as it is told me, I must know, and learne the properties, conditions, and state of all these virgins vnder your gouernmēt, to the intent, that the beter I know them, the more I may loue them, & that whē I shal depart frō hence: I may the better bee able to answere & direct those that shall aske or séeke to learne any thing of me. Hum. My name is

Humility my Father, Contempt of himself my Knowledge of himselfe, my Grandfather, his wife is called Knowledge of God: my foster named Grandfather commeth from a City called To marke and consider what I am, what I haue béene, what I shall be. My Grandmother from a towne, called Consideration of the loue of God. There are but two wayes to go to the country of my grandfather, and onely two gates whereby to enter in, the first is, Man himselfe, the other All creatures, and men say, no man can enter into either of these gates, but by flying, and that our Lord God himselfe builded this City with his own hands, considering that none but he could finish so commodious, so beautiful, and so firme a building. De. Would our Lord God, whose maiesty, and excellency is so great, put himselfe to the building of such stony and clay-workes? Hum. Yea truely, for hée is an excellent Workeman, and both a skilfull mason and carpenter, and taketh great delight in making earthen works, & buildings. De. What is the cause that he doth this, considering that hee hath néede of nothing? Hum. Nothing, but his owne goodnes, doth constraine or moue him to doe this: whence it proceédeth, that he neuer ceaseth to benefite others, neither séeketh hee, or studieth with all things that he maketh, and goeth about any o-

ther

ther thing, but the benefit, felicity and saluation of all men, the honour and prayse to himselfe alone reserued. And for this cause, doth he make of so base, and vile a mater, so goodly and beautifull workes as he doth, that the worthines of the worke, being compared with the baseneſſe of the matter, al men might admire him, praise him and loue him. D. I maruaile that so excellent a Lord as he is, would seeke for praise, considering thereby hee may bee touched with vaine-glory: Hum. There is nothing lesse to bee feared, than that in him: he beeing so perfite that no greater perfection can be added to him, and all honour and glory that can be yelded to him, cannot be saide vaine, beeing onely proper to him: and how great honour soeuer we can giue to him, yet in regard of that which beseemeth him, and is due to him, we can neuer honor him answerable to his dignity. And for that cause will hee bee exalted and prayſed, not that he desireth glory, but because hee is most iuſt, and will that euery one haue that which is due to him, then seeing all prayſe, honour and glory is due to him alone, beeing only good, his will is, that all prayſe, honor and glory, be yeelded onely to him. But if any other shal seeke or desire after glory, they may bee iuſtly called vaine-glorious, because they take it from him, to whome it onely appertaineth, and hee may

truely be called a thiefe, that taketh to himselfe, an other mans goods, against the will of the true owner.

Chap VIII.

Humility continueth her speech.

DESIRE. Now Lady mother, that you haue told me your parentage and stocke, I desire to know, how you came to bée chiefe Gouernesse of this house: for in my opinion, it is a great honour and dignity, and I my selfe, in time may come to bee a Gouernour: for there is great difference, betwéene commaunding and obeying: Humility hearing what hee saide, beganne to wéepe, of whome Desire demaunded the cause of her wéeping. Hum. My sonne, I cannot containe my teares to sée, that outwardly thou séemest clad with the habite of Humility, and yet inwardly thou appearest naked and bare, and that in shew, thou seemest religious and vertuous, but in heart & minde, voide of vertue and deuotion. In vain haue we vsed our passed discourse, séeing these thoughts and desires of thine, are so cleane repugnant from the wil of my father, and most dearely beloued Lord Iesus, who neither in word nor déed, euer sought, or desired rule or gouernment, and came not into this world to be serued but to serue. From which path who soeuer turneth and strayeth, walketh the way

of

of damnation, not saluation. But Oh vnhappy & miserable creatures that we are, to whom it is allotted to rule and gouerne others, considering how hard a task we take in hand, if wée will but commaund our selues as we ought. Such honour is indéed but misery, and full of cares, labors, wearines, afflictions, sorrows, dangers, & most horrible feares: and which if it be not well ordered and gouerned, is in the end accompanied with ignominy and shame. O ouer heauie burthen of rule & cómandement, in which nothing is found but labour and trouble, wherein hatred, repining, & ill wil is receiued from those that should acknowledge, and yeelde obedience and thanks. If thou remainest any time here amongst vs, thou shalt finde by experience my sayings true. Now to answere thy demaund, how I came to bée gouernesse: I will for the Loue of God acquaint thee with the meane. When first I entred into this house, I purposed, and so perswaded my selfe, that I was but a labouring beast, and the seruant of the other Virgins: and this determination of mine, I so resolued to performe, and imprinted it deepely in my mind and heart, continually calling it freshly to my minde, and praying to God to make mee still desire it, and that it would please him to make mee worthie to bée his Spouse, and so through his appointment,

I came to be gouernesse, although of my selfe I neither would or desired it. Desire hearing Humilities discourse, thought her a virgine, of very rare vertue, in that for the Loue of God, shee had so detected and debased her selfe, and perceyuing her to be yet a Virgin, vnderstood the Matrimony that she spake of, to be spirituall and not carnal, & said. De. Then I perceiue, who so will bee a Superiour and Ruler, must according as you haue done, first humble and debase himselfe. Hum. It is true my son as by experience thou mayst find it. De. And how may I trie it? Hum. By seeing those that humble themselues to be exalted: yet to take heede, that thou humble not thy selfe to that end, that thereby thou desire to be exalted, for so, thou shalt sinne in pride: and pride, and humility are open enemies, and euer oppose themselues, one against the other. For what so euer thou doest, if thou truely humble thy selfe, thou canst not, in the same action, exalt thy selfe. But if thou humble thy selfe, because thou wouldest be exalted, thy shew is humble, but thy act is proud. And because the action is to be taken, according to the intent of the mind, such humility is called pride. By which reason humility may diuersly be tearmed pride. For if wee haue respect to the action of such a man outwardly, he carrieth a shew of humility, but loo-

looking to the end of his humble action, wee shall finde it, wholy to proceede from pride. And to speake properly, humility it selfe, contendeth not with pride, but the spirit of humility; and it is impossible, to haue these two agree in one: for humility is but an act, but the spirit of humility, containeth both the act and the cause, and intention of humbling, and detecting our selues.

CHAP. IX.

Humility continueth her discourse, and teacheth how to striue against Vice.

NOw my forenamed husband (I mean my purpose I vndertooke to humble my selfe, like a labouring beast, and the seruant of all men) assisted me faithfully, in a certaine conflict I had with an other Lady and her Maydens of the house of Pride, whose gouernesse was called Pride of life, which daily endeoureth to scratch out mine eyes, and still brauleth with me: and shee bringeth with her both the vnder gouernesse of her house, called Concupiscence of the flesh, & her steward, Concupiscence of the eies. To these three associates her selfe a lewde maide, both mother and nurse of them called Negligence, who being often weake and feeble, is easily ouercome: but sometime she so filleth her selfe, with eating and drinking, that she becommeth fatte and strong.

and

and then is shee very dangerous. Shee hath attending on her, a certaine maide, dull, foolish and ill brought vp, called Malice, with whom come hither three other maides, Anger, Sloth & Enuy. And vnto the three last, associate themselues, two other, that is, Naughty Suspition & Rash Iudgement. All these, are at mortall enmity with me, and still oppose themselues against me, with whome I am dayly to contend and fight. Therfore so oft as they enter in here I with the assistance of my husband straite driue them out, and force them to flie. And then haue we an other feare, least the Maide which continually watcheth at the gates, I mean Vain-Glory, presently steps in. For if once we giue her opportunity to enter, she robbeth vs of the fruit, and benefit which wee got by expelling our other forenamed enemies: so that then we are barren of all goodnesse, and loose the labour we tooke in our former conflict. De. How then chanceth it, that when these other your enemies enter in here, she standing at the gates, doth not also enter. Hu. This is the reason, those other Maidens vse the benefit of wings, and enter not by the gate, but flie ouer the walles, and often they hide themselues so secretly in some corner of the house, that when we least suspect them, they walk and wander vp and downe amongst vs, wherefore

wee

we are of necessitie to keepe a carefull watch, least suddenly they come vpon vs, and spoile vs vnlooked for. De. Let vs discourse, yet longer of this matter, and tell me why you are at such debate and contention with them, considering how ill a thing it is, to giue such example to worldly men, when they shall see such discord and dissention amongst religious persons; who they know should be gentle, pittifull and mild, for the Loue of God to all men? Hum. The cause of our strife and dissention with them, is all only for that cause, we expel them our house, because they are open and professed enemies to the Loue of God, who is our chiefe Lord and Master, and whosoeuer is an enemie to the Loue of God, we will haue neither friendship or familiarity, by any meanes with him.

CHAP. X.

Of Concupiscence of the flesh.

DEsire was greatly pleased to heare how great confidence Humility had in the Loue of God, and desired of her to instruct him, by what means and helpes they ouercame and expelled those daungerous Maydens, their professed enemies. Hum. I would willingly doe it, but because I am not yet fully acquainted with thy Nature, life, conditions and minde, but only goe vpon coniectures and imaginations; I rest yet doubtfull whi-

whither I may instruct thee herein or no. For considering the contrariety and difference of mens natures, the sweetest honey tasteth not sweet to all men. De. Whatsoeuer I seeme in shew to your iudgement: or what opinion soeuer you haue of me: yet I wholy submit my selfe to your will, and yeeld me to bee ordered by your direction, only desiring to be instructed by you, what meanes to vse, to find the Loue of God. Hum. Upon that condition I will satisfie your desire, and will imparte and make knowne to you my exercises, and course of life. First that holy purpose and determination of mine, which I spake of before, hath made me Mistris of the whole world, so long as I shall contemne and despise it. And Mistris ouer my owne body by fasting, and discipline, and by my voluntary and willing humility: I say, not onely Mistris and commandresse ouer my ghostly enemy, but ouer all the world, and yet farther which is greatest, Mistris and commaundresse ouer my selfe, for when the World seeth mee to labour and endeauour, with all my diligence to please the Loue of God, it repugneth me and all my family, yet I still retaine peace and tranquility with my forenamed husband. Now Desire, greatly admired the vertue and force of him, whome Humility so often had named her husband

band, and said. De. I beseech you Lady Mother, instruct mee by similitudes that I may more plainely conceiue your meaning. For I am but of dull and slow conceipt, and by examples I shall better conceiue your sayings. This request of Desire pleased Humility wel, finding that by acknowledging his owne dulnesse, hee was now become both modest and humble, whereupon shee said to him. Humi. So soone as I see, any of my before named enemies enter in hither, I thus behaue my selfe, if it be the first which is Concupiscence of the flesh. I foreknow already her cõditions and behauiours, which are to bee exceedingly giuen to gluttony, and to pamper her body by excesse of eating and drinking. Therefore first I take from her all kinde of delicate diet, neyther doe I allowe her, her fill of ordinary meat and drinke; And because I am not strong enough of my selfe, to tame and master her, in regard that my domesticall seruants assist her, I vse others helpe, and place on my right hand Gods grace, which may strengthen and defend me from this dangerous enemy. I also craue the ayde and assistance of my husband, and then say to her. Sister, I haue my selfe despised my flesh, and make no better account of my selfe then of a labouring beast, and beasts seeke not after dainty and delicate fare, but onely that as

may

may be sufficient to sustayne nature, and art content with that, which is allowed them, by the discretion of their Master. And if the Master find him to be wanton and deuouring, hee mulcteth him, that he neuer eateth, but when & what in his discretion he shall like of. And so Sister, in this respect I am content to be vsed and ruled like a beast, besides the Loue of God hath giuen mee a bridle, which is made of Sobriety, that I cannot eate but at wonted times, and that I desire not, or loke to haue any other meat, or more daintely dressed then such as ordinarily is set before mee, and therewith I satisfie & content my selfe. Farther the Loue of God hath enioyned me to this also, if I will serue and please him as I ought, to eate temperately and moderately, and onely for necessary sustenance, of that, whatsoeuer it bee that is set before me: and that for good manners I alwaies leaue somewhat in the dish, thereby to shewe that more is allowed me, then I can well eate. For when all is eaten that is set before vs, it is as much as if you should say, my allowance is not sufficient for me, neither am I content therewith, therefore I desire to haue more set on the table. And yet farther this rule is giuen me to obserue for the Loue of God. That I would and should desire lesse to bee allowed mee, and the same worse dressed, then the allow-

allowance of my Sisters: and alwaies to wish somthing to be wanting about me, and therin to reioyce for the Loue of God. By these and like meanes, this malepert wanton maide is ouercome, & driuen away from molesting me. But when againe she shall prouoke and stirre me, to wanton pleasure, not onely by my owne flesh, but also by others. I then flye from her, as fast as I can secluding my selfe from all such company, as may allure or entice me to pleasure or concupiscence. And against this assault, I find that to seclude my selfe from company, is a present remedy and most soueraigne preseruatiue. Neither, doth this enemy assault mee one'yin my body, but in my soule also, by suggesting many ill thoughts. Against which also I vse, the remedy of flight and hide my selfe, either in some corner of a rocke, or else in some vnfrequented and solitary place, and there settle al my thoughts and cogitations, vpon my most sweete Sauiour Iesus, calling to minde his most holy life his passion, torments, and most bitter death. Also meditating vpon the cruell torments of Hell, the seuere and iust Iudgement of Almighty GOD. My owne departure from this miserable world, and that of necessity I must appeare before the Iudgement seate of God: there to giue accompt of all my thoughts, words, and deeds. By these and

like

like meanes, I ouercome, and put to flight, this forenamed maiden, who is the Lieuetenant of the Castle of Pride.

Chap. XI.

Of the concupiscence of the eyes, and pride of life.

YEt farther, to ouercome and cleane subdue this enemy, it is also requisite to vanquish and conquer her companion, I meane Concupiscence of the eyes the steward or gouernor of the house of Prid who alwaies giueth wings to concupiscence of the flesh. For cõtinually she ministreth occasion to her companion, who notwithstanding, I ouercome with my holy purpose. For so soone as she commeth, I say thus to her. Sister, I am no better then a laboring beast, who neuer desireth superfluities, or more then is allowed him, but alwaies is contented with so much as is necessary, neither expecteth curiosity in that which is to bee had of necessity, little regarding whither his saddell and bridell be guilded or imbordered, or whether the stable be curiously adorned, but content if conueniently he may stand and lie. Considering then that for the Loue of God, I account my selfe no better then a beast: I will also vse my body as if it were a beast. And as the breaker, and rider of a stiffe necked horse, with the raines of a bridle, enforceth him to stoppe

stop & turne: so the Loue of God, hath by sides & tide me, with the bridle and chaine of Shamfastnes and bashfulnes: that I shall not curiously see, & couet the vanities of the world. For I ought not behold: that I ought not desire. And the Loue of God hath taught mee to say, when I see a thing beautiful, pleasing, rare, singular, or curious, I neuer will settle my loue on thée but refuse thée, and hold thée but as a méere vanity, therefore remembring the worthines of my creation, I will not bestowe my loue, or fix my affection, on so vile, so base, and so transitory a thing: but on that which in it self is the onely treasure, and goodnes, and a beauty which neither age or sicknes can blemish, I meane on my sweéte Sauiour and Redéemer Jesus; who demaundeth of mée my loue and affection, and may iustly chalendg the same as his owne. By these and the like meanes this other maide is ouercome. Now these two being vanquished in maner as I haue tould you, there yet remaineth the last which is mistris of these, one more terrible, crafty and more subtle then the other, euer lying in waite to hinder good actions, her name is called Pride of Life, who whensoeuer thée commeth in hither amongst vs, is alwayes attended with one or other hand-maide, and still bringeth with her either Good or euil estimation. But straight

I say to her, a beast is no better to be accompted of then a beast, neither is to be thought, worthy of honour, or estimation, but rather ignominy, and base contempt. Then sometime she commeth complaining to me, and saith: see how my superiours behaue themselues toward me, and vse me: both in age, wit, and iudgment I am not their inferiors, yet they vse such and such a one, with better respect then me. But presently I find out her craft and subtelty, and preuenting her, reply: A beast is not to be vsed but basely, and according to his masters discretion, to be whipped and beaten. For if at any time his maister, shall vse him but gently, and play with him; he presentlie will kick, and forget the duty due to him. Therefore a wise Master, and men of good gouernment, although they loue their beastes neuer so well: yet will neuer vse extraordinary, and vndue familiarity to them; but allwayes carry themselues with a kind of seuere grauity, considering such familiarity is neuer atributed to humility, curtesie, loue, or affability, but rather to simplicity, and mere fondnesse. For such familiarity doth rather hurt, then benefit a beast. But a discreet, & wise maister, will rather endeuour with all possible diligence, that his beast, or horse, keepe his right way in their iourney, and cary carefully, the burthen laid on their backes, then that

the

the world should think him fond of them, or expect to bee held a kinde, and louing Master, and one that should take to bee prayed of them. For by these meanes it might happen, as oft we see it, that either the Master towardes the beast, or the beast forget himselfe towardes the Master, when the Master vseth not such reason, moderation, and discretion, as he ought: and that indiscretion may giue occasion to the beast, to stray out of their bounds, farther then is allowed, and so by little and little, vsing an ill custome, the Master shall not dare to direct, or gouerne according to the superiority hee hath ouer his beast; but if hee chance for their negligence to strike or beate them, they presently will resist, and kicke againe at him. And then if the beest happen either to cast off his burthen, or else to carry it contrary to his Masters minde, he must néeds winke at it, and suffer him to goe, where and as hee will himselfe, and so, he to bee obedient to the beast, not the beast to him. Euen so Sister, were it like to proue with mee, if I should yeeld to my owne sensuall affections, and bee carried away with worldly pleasures, and vanities. But hee that loueth mee, and hath care ouer mee, doth with his discretion correct mee, and bridle my will; that I fall not to open shame, and so bee vndone, but

for the loue hée carrieth to my soule, hée doth chastice & discipline my body at his discretion. Neither doe I my selfe wish to bée vsed better then a beast. At some other time the same pride of life, cõmeth to me vnder the couler of Enuy, and complaineth thus. Se how such and such an office is giuen to this, and that body: But no reckoning or accompt is made of me. One is made gouernesse, and an other vnder-gouernesse, the third the steward, and an other secretary; but my selfe, which am inferior to none of them in yeares, or desert, am neglected and nothing regarded at all. No place of credit is committed to me, wherin I might rule or command ouer others: but alwaies I am detected like a base kitchin wench: Yea, I am made the vnderling of the meanest maide in the house. And now I find it true that they of best deserts are commonly and for the most part least considered. For which cause hence forth I will de serue lesse: for I sée, they that counterfette to be lambes are deuoured of wolues. Such and like complaints, doth shée oft make to me, as though I knew not the grounde from whence it came. To whome I answer; Sister, I haue not giuen ouer and forsaken the world, and betaken my selfe to this solitary, and sequestred life, thereby to rule others, and to moderate their causes. For since my first entrance hither

I haue vowed obedience, and therfore will performe that which I came hither to doe, and for which I was called, and which I vndertooke to accomplish at my entrance. For God will neuer demaund or aske account of mee, how much I haue commaunded and ruled others, or with how much honor, or how great offices I haue bẽn eralted in the world, but how humbly and dutifully I haue obeyed his commaundements, and how willingly I haue humbled my selfe to my superiours, and subiected and debased my owne wilfull & stubborne rude mind. Therfore Sister, I looke only to discharge and performe my owne office in that place and degree, to which I am called by God, and suffer others to looke likewise to that charge of theirs to which by Gods prouidence they are as my selfe called. Meane time this one thing I know for certaine, that I liue in the state of assured saluation. (That is vnder true obedience, humility and subiection,) from which no man can fall, except he first clime higher. And so hereof I haue no iust cause to complaine, but rather to reioyce, prayse and yeld dayly thanks to almighty God, in that he hath debarred and as it were taken from me, the meanes and occasion of falling into the great perils and dangers, into which high offices and places of dignity and preferment, are woont to draw and throw head-

long men that seeke not after perfection: which is truly verified by this saying of Saint Augustine, I neuer found Gods ire and indignation more against mee, then that it pleased him to appoint mee a commaunder ouer others: which truely Desire ought not to seeme strange to thee: for as this wicked wench which beareth such sway in the house of Pride is more proue to wickednes then all her fellowes: so must we (if throughly wee will subdue her) vse greater policy, strength and exercise of vertue. And to the end I protract not the time with circumstances, I now will deliuer no vain discourse to thee, but will instruct thee, by what meanes and grounds thou shalt be able to ouercome & put to flight, this crue of wicked maydens. When any of these which soeuer she bee, shall come and seeme to complaine as I haue declared before: be thou ruled by me, and follow my example: as if Concupiscence of the flesh shall come and say, I am allowed both too little meat, & yet that is cold, and not cleanly dressed: my wine is sowre, and euery thing in our house is sluttishly ordered; answere her but thus, shee that hath more then shee deserueth, hath no cause to complaine: But thou deseruest not browne bread & colde water, which most holy and religious men haue bin contented to liue with. Therfore thou which art so wicked, so

loathfull, so disdainefull & ready to complaine, voide of all deuotion, inconstant, enuious and vnthankefull to God: doest not deserue the coursest bread and water. Which being true, & yet hauing good bread, wine, and other meate: Why shouldest thou complaine, and hast more then thy desert: answere her alike if thee finde fault with her apparrell. The like reply make also to Concupiscence of the eyes, if she seeke after or wish for this thing or that, and say, O wretch that thou art, who by thy owne desert, art not worthy to enioy the least good that is. Yet hast thou the vse, of many deuout and vertuous books, by reading of which if thou wouldest, thou mightest become good. And although (neuertheless) one were sufficient for thee: yet hast thou holy books of prayers and meditations. Tel me what is it thou desirest more: truly vnder a shew of desiring thinges of necessity: thou longest after and seekest for things of superfluity, then the which nothing can be more opposite to the profession of Pouerty. And although therby thy good deed be not clearly lost: yet assure thy selfe it is much empaired. And nothing can more dishonour & shame him, that professeth in pouerty to imitate our Sauiour, then to haue lesse vertue and taste of Religion. then the Heathens who professed the worship of false gods. Amongst whome Seneca shewed

himselfe a worthy Captaine and teacher of Pouerty, as we may finde if we read what is written of him: the same answere giue I to the third, that is, Pride of life, when thee commeth to me, with a desire to be honoured, loued, accounted of, exalted or preferred to some office. For then say I to her. Thou wretched wench, thou hast more honor already then thou deseruest: what? hast thou not through the number of thy sinnes deserued, to be throwne headlong downe, into the bottomlesse pit of hell? there to be partaker of the paines of the damned, and yet beholde, how much thou art honoured of God, who not onely doth tollerate thée, to liue amongst his creatures, but hath admitted thee also into his house and family: and willingly would haue thee, not onely his seruant, but also if thou wouldst, one of his daughters. And although thy owne vnworthinesse bee such, that thou deseruest not to be reckoned amongst his inferiour seruants, yet hath hée admitted thée into his priuate chamber, and willingly would haue thy presence, both night & day, that thou mightest frely talke with him, praise him, honour him and serue him: and that yet liuing here in this mortall life, thou maist be honored with the office of Angels, bee chosen as one of his most speciall Friends, sit at his own table, and fáre on the foode himselfe feedeth. And

now

now proude Wench what is it thou wouldest more, whither wouldest thou, through thy pride clime? wouldest thou ascend againe from whence thou once diddest fall? that thou mightest be plunged as deepe in the bottomlesse pitte of hell, as is Lucifer thy father, whose Pride threw him thither, what wouldest thou desire? wouldest thou be God? Truely thou canst not say that thou wantest any thing, open thy blind eyes, and willingly confesse that thou hast receaued greater benefites from God, then thy base deserts could any way challenge, content thy selfe with that, which it hath pleased God to bestow on thee, and rest satisfied with that estate and degree, which God by his seruantes hath allotted to thee, and assure thy selfe that all things haue their effect, according to the prouidence and permission of God.

Chap. XII.

By what meanes the other forenamed naughty Maids may be ouercome.

NOw these three principall enemies being cleane ouercom, Negligence their nurse is easily vanquished, who by a thousand secret corners stealeth in here amongst vs. Somtime at time of prayer, and somettimes againe when we should attend our works and labours: but still I answere her with this or like answere: Sister, a labouring beast or a horse, is not kept

in the stable, to be idle, liue easily, eate, drinke, and sleepe: but still contentedly to labour and take paines. For except hee bee accustomed to labour, watch and fast: he groweth resty and taketh stomacke, and will strike at his master, who so soone as he perceiueth the ill conditions of his beast, presently will beate him, and kicke him with a spurre: Euen so the Loue of God, doth giue me a spur, I meane Feare, wher with when I ware sloathful hee pricketh me. And I my selfe, who am but a seruant and a base vassall of this house, doe finde by proofe, that the Maidens of this place must be made to labour, and that they must not bee fauoured in that, which is commaunded them, neyther are to be suffered to liue idely and wantonly, least they grow to haue willes, and repugne their Superiours. For no Creature is worse then a proud and naughty seruant. Farther I demand whether thee thinke the kingdome of heauen is to be obtained, by eating, drinking, sleeping, and liuing idely, which thee for thame cannot affirme. For our Sauiour Iesus Christ walked a cleane contrary way. And if hee chose a different way, to come to perpetuall felicity, and would suffer his bitter passion, and that way enter into glory: wee likewise if we desire to be partakers with him in glory, must also walke the path of patience, persecution,

and

and pouerty. For so long as our head will goe one way, and our foote an other; our whole body can neuer bee directed the true way.

Therefore, except wee walke the path of persecution, affliction, labour and contempt; wee cannot thinke to bee incorporated with him, but like corrupt members, must looke to bee cut of, and throwen into hell fire, there to bee consumed. For except wee be partakers of our Saviours passion, and seeke him, and suffer with him on the Crosse: wee must not expect to partake with him, any part of his glory, or of his resurrection. And to conclude except we be partakers in this life with our Saviour IESVS Christ, who was whipped spit vpon, despised, wearied and toyled with daily labours, poore, continually suffering hunger and thirst, and at last enduring for our sinnes his bitter passion, and suffering like an offender his paynes on the Crosse; when notwithstanding hee was voide of all faulte, and of all innocents the most innocent that liued, except I say wee imitate him herein: wee shall neuer finde him a sweete, gentle, and friendly King of glory, and Prince of peace. Somtime this naughty Wench, I still mean Negligence, creepeth into our Oratory, and there being weary, through lasines and sloath, is perplexed as if shee were cast

into

into a prison. Then say I, Sister, true and perfect religion, neuer complaineth of troublesomnesse or wearinesse. What can I giue again to our Lord, for the many benefites hee hath bestowed on me? what can I do or suffer enough for my sweet Sauiour and Redeemer Iesus, who of his exceeding loue and voluntary will, continued on the Crosse, not sitting as I doe, but stretched thereon, not cloathed, but naked and trembling with colde, not in a house as I am, but in the open cold ayre not hauing shoes on his feete to keepe them warme, but nayled to the Crosse with great boysterous and cold yron nayles; all which payns & torments he suffered for my sake, why then should I shew my selfe so vngrate: that although not all, yet I will not suffer somewhat againe for him? he suffered here for my sake, most exceeding miseries and painefull labours, and those not for an howre a night or a day, but all his life, which was 33 yeares, he hung aliue thus howres vpon the Crosse, in exceeding paynes, most bitter torments, and vnsufferable griefes, such I say, whose like was neuer felt of man: and yet he most louing Sauiour esteemed them but small in regard of his loue and kindnes towards me; and willingly would haue suffered yet greater then these, if necessity any wayes had vrged him to it. Considering then that he

he is a King, and I no better then a most base bondslaue, he is God, and I dust, dust and corruption, he most holy and innocent, I a sinner worthy of nought but punishment, then he hauing suffered all this for me: shall I grudge or repine to suffer a little for him? What, is the seruant to be regarded aboue the Master? No, Away then Negligence, for I must be busied in those things which are my fathers. Smal is the reward we shall receiue here: if we be not free from all wearinesse of the place. For cursed is he that doth the works of God loathfully and negligently. For God seeketh not seruice that is done by compulsion, neither is hee delighted with vnwilling sacrifices, but with that which is done with a willing mind, and proceedeth from a sincere and perfect heart: Now this old accursed Wench, being put to her flight, we must also banish her foolish handmaides, who by how much the more they bee wicked and daungerous: by so much the more are they vehement and strong, and the lesse we labour to mortifie and subdue them: the harder shall we finde it to banish and expell them. The first of them which is Malice, accompanied with her Daughter Anger. I answere in this manner, so soone as she assaulteth mee. Sister, Charity is patient and gentle, then taking the assistance of my husband, my Purpose

I sup-

suppresse her and say againe. Nothing can be inflicted on this beast so seuere, but that she hath deserued far greater correction. If then I haue deserued greater punishmẽts, I may iustly say I am fauourably spared, not being vsed in right according to my deserts. And it is the part of a gentle beast, not to behaue himselfe stubbornly or rudely to his master, and his whole family, but farre contrary to that quietly, modestly, & gently to all men. For although perhaps to day his master beat him, yet to morrow again he will fede him wantonly, and will behaue himselfe toward him like a louing and kind master. And although perhaps outwardly he make no shewes of affection, yet inwardly doubtlesse he esteemeth him highly, but yet dissembleth his affection and loue, least he take stomacke being pampered, and so kicke against his master. Besides a beast doth soone forget any wrong or iniury, & is pleased againe, if his master but stroke him on the head, or the necke: so I my selfe being iniured by any one of my sisters, imagining I am a beast & a base vassall, beare it patiently for the Loue of God, & suffer them to vse me according to their pleasures, assuring my selfe that I cannot endure so many iniuries from them, as my own vnworthinesse doth daily deserue: and knowing farther, that our Lord permitteth for the heinousnes of my sins, that I be af-

afflicted of them here in this life, so to learn to suffer afflictions for his sake. And now see this maid, who thou sayest doth with me nothing, but hurt and offence, & that other who thou saiest doth secretly backbite me, & all these other of whome I am so hated as thou sayest: these I say hate not or malice me, but my vices, faults, defects, my malice, my ill manners, and conditions, and most of all my obstinate and stubborne will. Therefore I haue cause rather to thinke they loue me, for what herein they doe, proceedeth from zeale, and a most holy purpose, neyther haue they any agrément with Malice or thinke her meet to consort with Vertue. Let vs now therefore consider more iudicially, If I be or would be thought the handmaide of God: I must hate and detest (cum from my hart) all my sins, defects, offences, & imperfections, & the pronenes of my frailety, which draweth me to these, which being true, why should I malice or stomacke those, which doe but that which my selfe am bound to. To conclude, know that those who thou sayest speake ill of me, and detract me, yet notwithstanding are my sisters, whom I am cõmanded to loue, not to hate: and therefore wil I do that which I am enioined, & yet mean while let them consider, and weigh with themselues, why and to what end they afflict & iniure me. Now againe at some other time she trieth

trieth me with Enuie, a maid who vseth a two edged sword & hurteth her Sisters both in body and soule. This wench is indeed a daungerous enemy, whose chiefest felicity is in her Sister Hurt: and is neuer more grieued then at their vertue and good life. Therefore when thee commeth to assault mee, I say Sister, you complaine and seeme to be grieued that others in this world possesse greater riches, that others are endued with more rare beauty, that others haue more aboundantly the gifts of nature then your selfe, but I take comfort and reioyce euen in that, and thinke my selfe happy in wanting them. For neither in this life or the life to come, desire I any thing but IESVS Christ my Sauiour, he is my treasure and the treasure of Angels, hee is my beauty, and the beauty of all Creatures, he is my gaine, and the fountaine of all goodnesse: Let others fire their loue where best it shall like them; I desire onlie my Sauiour Iesus, and his loue euer doe I thirst after, with him is no difference twixt rich and poore, he neuer distinguisheth twixt beautifull and foule. Yet here thou complainest and sayest to me, this and that body abounds, and excell in wealth and beauty, such and such happines is giuen them, and not me. But on the contrary this I reply. Although these parties are possessed of these pleasures; yet haue I my

selfe

selfe things of greater esteeme. For so Noble and so great is the minde that I carry, that it skorneth to bestow loue or affection on so base, so abiect, and so transitorie pleasures. And considering that my name is called Humility, by humility meane I to conquere my selfe. And I finde the seruants and children of God to abound with these, and greater blessinges: but not my selfe, who am a base vassall, and no way worthy to be partaker therof. Now Enuy seeing she preuaileth little with her former obiections, vrgeth in an enuious manner, the gift of spirituall vertues, saying, behold such a Sister, who thou knowest right well, is more giuen to vertue and deuotion, then thou art, is more conuersant with God, and more exercised in contemplation, and is a Virgine of noted sobriety and modesty. To whome I straight answere. For what cause desire I to be religious, or to be vertuous and deuoted to prayer? because others should thinke better of me, then they doe of my Sisters, prayse me, honour mee, or admire my vertues? or else because I would be more daintily fedde, clade more costly, or abound in worldly pleasures? No truely, but for this cause onely, that I may serue and please God, and that my sweet Sauiour Iesus, may by mee, and in mee be praysed and honoured. Therefore it is my duty, and that which I am

bound to reioyce in, when I see that my most louing Lord and Master, hath such vertuous deuout seruants, that be wholy giuen to his seruice and prayer, and endued with most rare holinesse of life, and spend their time in Religious exercises. And I hold it my duety to pray to God, to giue them greater perfection, and more abounndant grace, whereby hee may bee more highly honored of them. For if I had but the least tast of Gods loue in me, were it not my part and duety to labour what I could, that hee might be known, honoured and loued of all the world, and to pray that hee would bestow his grace on all men, whereby he might of them be continually honoured? Therefore most accursed Wench, flie farre from my sight. Thou knowest not what charitable Loue is, considering thou art the daughter of that wicked, damnable, and false Apostata. For I would if it pleased God, that he depriued mee of all spirituall and corporall good, which of his bounty he hath bestowed on me, and giue them to others, who with them would honour, and prayse him more then I doe, who am so barren and vnfruitfull a soile, and haue receiued his grace and gifts in vaine. For I desire nothing in this world, but Gods prayse and honour, & will dayly seeke it, how dearely so euer I obtaine it. See then wretched Wench how farre

thou

thou art deceiued. Markest thou not that God knowest what he doth? he seeth plainely that these vessels, into which so abundantly he infuseth his blessings: be farre more pure, and of a more humble spirit then I my selfe. And therefore iustly hath denyed me such grace, seeing right well that I am ful of pride, and a vessel filled with anger and malice, which through haughtinesse of minde, would proudly attempt; to scale (if it cold) the heauens themselues, which duely pondered, I rest contented with the will and pleasure of my sweete Lord Iesus, neither desire I to find ought else but him.

Chap. XIII.

By what meanes wee may expell all Malice from our selues.

The thirde daughter of Malice is called Sloath, a most dangerous enemy, who is cold and lasie in spirituall exercises, and the seruice of GOD: wherein consisteth the summe of our saluation. Her am I wont to answere in this manner. Thou desirest sister and willingly wouldest perswade mee, neither to frequent the seruice of God: nor to vse at all any spirituall exercises. And therefore of purpose to conquer and subdue thee, I wil spende more time in watching and praying, and diuine Contemplation, whereunto thee

thus replieth. Seest not thou thy selfe euen frozen with a colde deuotion, and to feele no whitte at all any zeale of Gods seruice in thee, but to vse thy exercises, against thy owne voluntary disposition, which prouoketh iustly the indignation of God. Neyther dooest thou ought else but tempt God therein, who desireth no vnwilling, or impulsiue seruices, but such as proceede from a chearefull and willing minde. Then reply I againe. Away thou wicked wretch, I perceiue thy meaning. Knowest thou not that at such time I shew my loue greater to God, when I serue him with my owne wil, be it neuer so smal, then when I find my selfe endued with extraordinary deuotion by him: art thou ignorant that God sometimes of purpose withdraweth his grace, thereby to trie and proue our strength? And then when he perceiueth vs to offer vp, and bestow on him that little deuotion which is remaining in vs: he doubleth his grace, & heauenly consolation in vs. Yet so, that finding our selues voide of inward sensible grace, we cast not cleane away our good wil and harty desire Therfore whereas thou aliest why being so colde, and cleane voide of deuotion yet I goe to pray (considering as thou sayest, that is but to tempt God) assure thy selfe, although I felt in mee far lesse deuotion, and will to serue God: yet that not

notwith

withstanding I would frequent my prayers & would set my selfe in the sight of our Lord, neyther would I speake or desire ought of him, but standing before him, would yéeld to him all due honour and reuerence, imagining himselfe to be present in my sight, and that I beheld him, and that there I stood before his high, diuine, and fearefull Maiesty. That he who is the fire of loue would inflame my hart when hee should thinke conuenient. Therefore submit I my self to his holy will, & am content with that which it shal please him to grant me: and the weaker, fainter, and colder I finde my selfe, so much the nearer I will come to this fire. For if I will depart from it, then shall I finde my selfe farre colder then before. Therefore depart from mee thou naughty wench, for I doe not vse & frequent my daily prayers, my deuoute contemplations, & spirituall exercises, for my own contentment, comfort or delight, but onely to this end, thereby to serue my Lord God, and honour him, considering I know it to be his holy will and pleasure, that I should doe so; and that I exercise my selfe in all vertue, and holines to the honor and prayse of his holy name. Now when this wicked mayden with her practises cannot withdraw me from the Loue of God, she taketh a new course, and laboureth to winne my loue from my fellow Sisters, And taking the

assistance of her before named Iealousies, Suspition and rash iudgement assaulteth me again, and perswadeth me to hate and malice my sisters, and to carry a sinister opinion of them, whereby I should eyther suspect some ill in thē, or else rashly without some iust cause condemn them, hence proceed contempt, repining, murmuring and detraction. But my selfe with the assistance of my Purpose marking her, presently answere. It beseemeth not so base, and so abiect a maid as my selfe, to iudge amisse of my sisters or superiours: neyther lawfull for sinners to intermeddle with sacred vessels, or for Beasts to come nigh the holy Mountaine. It best beseemeth mee to account all my Sisters, vertuous and holy, but my selfe most wretched, and full of foule sinne. For it is a secret to mee, what all men are in the sight of GOD, or in what manner they shall ende this mortall life. As for my selfe, I know right well, that my proneneſſe to sinne, and naughty appetites and desires, would drawe mee headlong to the pitte of hell, were I not preserued by Gods diuine grace and mercie. Therefore know I right well what I may feare of my selfe and suspect, that is, whither my Conscience, my Wordes and Dēedes, be good, for I know my selfe, but am a Stranger to others. And therefore so much as appertaineth

taineth to my Fellowes, I will choose the safest course, that is, to thinke, and speake all good of them, assuring my selfe thereby to gaine, but neuer to loose. For nothing is more daungerous, then to bee ruled by our owne will, and to refuse a certainety, for an vncertainety. Charity neuer thinketh amisse. And I finde it a charge great enough for mee, to iudge and discerne mine owne Conscience, my affections, my wordes, and deedes, and not to busie my selfe in censuring these, nor curiously to intermeddle in others actions. For who made mee a Iudge betweene God and my Sisters? or betweene them and their own conscience? Truely no man. Auoide thou therefore, or hast thou ought else to say? I plainely see thou art now ouercome, in seeking to suggest to mee a suspition of my Sisters, which is a most damnable, and wicked thing, and wholy repugnant to holy and true meaning Simplicity, whereof God himselfe is the chiefest Authour: with whome no man may, or can at any time dissemble. And if any man will say, that mistrust, or suspition may bee admitted, and allowed in a Superiour, or any one that hath rule ouer others, and that my before alledged Reasons bee not sufficient to refute him: Let him assure himselfe, that great diligence much

much wisedome, and carefull circumspection, must therein be vsed, and that for this respect, as experience teacheth vs. If a man will be suspitious of his wifes loyalty and honesty, & shee shall perceiue her husbands distrust, although perhaps before she were true to him, and honest, yet may she thereby bee moued to disloyalty. Whereupon Seneca saith, Suspition is the cause of many mens sin. Therefore considering their intention & purpose is good, why shouldest thou say their actions are naught, when in all likelyhood they might erre, either through ignorance or simplicity, or want of experience, by some sodaine motion, or humaine frailety, or by some naturall imperfection, which they are subiect to. And in all these accidents, no malitious, or foolish rash iudgement is to be giuen. But rather we must pitty and be sorrowfull for such imperfections, and excuse them charitably for the Loue of God. But if this answere in reason will not suffice thee, because thou saist their offences be too apparent, then I say, God by his secret iudgemēt suffereth such thinges to happen, through whose prouidence, all thinges happen, that exceede our grosse capacities. And as he neuer ceaseth of himselfe to doe good in vs: so sometime permitteth hee that wee fall into such temptations, which notwithstanding, hee oft

turneth

turneth either to the good of him that offended, or else to the good of others that haue seen it. Take thou heede therefore, thou proceede no further herein. For hee that will take vpon him to iudge others, vndertaketh that which appertaineth to God, or rather desireth that himselfe were God. Marke then wicked wretch, what befell thy Father when hee aspired to bee like vnto God. Farther, a horse, or any other labouring beast, is not soo malitious, or enuious a Nature, that hee suspect or holde in Iealousie his fellow beasts, or censure their actions in a wrong vnderstanding: but hath his mind onely set on his iourney, and that he may carry his burthen according to his Masters minde. Neyther regardeth he if any of his fellows erre in their way, but with an honest emulation will labour to his power, to follow, or goe before those hee ought to imitate. Which if he cannot, yet will hee keepe the way that hee is directed, and not intermeddle with any but himselfe. Neither will hee seeke at any time to goe backe againe, or rest in his iourney, except thereby hee may performe what he vndertaketh the better, neither grudge or repine at that he is commaunded, or backbite or slaunder his Master, or any other: considering then, that I haue made my selfe a beast for the Loue of God, I must

humble

humble and carry my selfe like a Beast, and intermeddle with nothing, but with my selfe.

Chap XIIII.

Of other exercises of Humility.

DEsire hauing with admiration atentiuely marked the exercises of Humility, saide vnto her. Now find I that true Lady mother, which I haue heard, that Humility containeth in her selfe, all iustice, vertue, peace, quietnesse and happinesse, and all spiritnall and temporall comfort and contentation. Yet farther I desire to know one doubte, whether these naughty wenches, when they come in here amongst you, be knowne by sight, or whither they take the habite of your Virgins, and so by subtlety intermingle amongst them: or what meane and way you haue to discouer them. Hum, Truelie sonne, thy question is a matter of great importance: know therefore that the diuine goodnes hath hanged vp a lamp in the midest of our chamber, called good conscience which burneth day and night, beeing kindled with the ople of his Mercy, and the wicke, or cotton of holy scripture: farther this lampe is to be tied with a rope, called watch ouer our hearts, to a naile; which is called watch ouer our sences; now so long as this lampe is kindled, & burneth, we neuer feare them, because we doe presently know them. And although they inter-

intermingle themselues with the good: yet by their gate we easily discerne them. For they be crooke shouldered, and hault and limpe in their pace, so that they neither can goe speedily, nor according to the vowe they made. But if through our sins this Lampe be extinguished, or by our negligence the naile slippe out, or the rope chance to breake, or our Lord for our demerites withdraw the oyle (which he neuer doth, except wee first shedde it) then are wee in darkenesse, and al things fal out to the worst for vs. Therefore pray wee dayly to our Lord God, that it will please him of his goodnesse, to lighten our Lampe, saying with the Prophet Dauid: for thou O Lord doest lighten my Lamp, lighten O God my darknes. De. God I beseech him, giue vs his grace and charity, for you haue greatly comforted my spirits. Hum. Take now for thy companions these Virgines here, and let them so long accompanie thee, vntil thou be throughly armed with true feare, that if by chance these wicked wenches fortune to meete thee, they aduenture not to shew their hate and malice against thee, nor endeauour to withdraw thee frō among vs: here hast thou Seuerity against Concupiscēce of the flesh, the first: manhood or strength against concupiscēce of the eies the 2. Humility against Pride of life, the third,

Dis-

Diligence against Negligence; the fourth: Gentlenes against Malice, the fift. And now the grace of God be alwayes with thee.

Chap. XV.

Of the Vertues that be daughters of Humility.

HVM. Thus by the grace of Almightie God, and the helpe and assistance of my forenamed Husband, I ouercome and subdue my enemies, and my selfe. Desire much pleased with this discourse of Humility, said to her. De. I entreat you Lady Mother, that it may stand with your good liking, that I may visite and be acquainted with the Virgins of this society. Hum. Proceede my sonne, assisted with Gods grace, most willingly I assent to thy desire. And thou daughter, which art Steward of this house, accompany him, and shew him the house, and bring him to the chamber of euery virgin This said, Desire departed chearfully out of the Lady mothers chamber, accompanied with Nihil pensio, or Contemptefal vnnecessary cares, who was steward of the house, & gouernes of the Nouices, & was carried by her to the chamber of a virgin, who was the first & eldest daughter of Humility, called Confession, of whom he asked the maner of her life and conditions. Conf. I am the daughter of our mother Humility, and the scholler of this

Vir-

Virgin bore our gouernesse, with whome I oft frequent, and am much delighted with her familarity and acknowledge my self what I am according as I find my selfe in examining my conscience. Desire thought this Virgin of rare and singular vertue, & departing from her was brought into the Cháber of an other daughter of Humility, whose name was Desire of Contempt, who receiuing him curteously, was asked of Desire, both her name and conditions. Vir. my name is Desire of Cõtempt because I desire not to be honored or estéemed of any man. Desire wondred hearing this Virgin desire to be so much contemned, considering how different it was from the mindes of most men. But admired her vertues, finding, she did it for the loue of God. And leauing her, was brought into the Chamber of an other Virgin, whose name was To reioyce in being contemned. Of whome Desire being entertained demãded likewise her name & cõditions. Vir. My name is To reioyce to be contemned. For I wish to be despised, scorned, & iniured for the Loue of God. De. Instruct me I beséech you how I may attaine to this vertue, for such is the hautines of my proud mind, that I doe not only reioyce: but am grieued & repine if I be contemned scorned, despised, or iniured. Vir. That proceedeth from want of Hmility, whose ver-

tue

tue is to contemne, and neglect her selfe for the Loue of God. And truely this is an apparant token that thou aboundest with pride, and ouer much selfe loue. But seing thou art by GOD conducted hither into this Palace wee will willingly instruct thee, in all kinde of vertue, and altering thy habit, will make thee a newe man, and will direct and instruct thee, how to speake with the Loue of God, for otherwayes thou shalt be sure for to loose thy labour. Therefore if thou wouldest attaine to my vertue, thou must imprinte in thy heart my Sister, Desire to be contemned thinking and determining thus with thy selfe, henceforth will I desire to be scorned and contemned, and to be neglected of all men for the Loue of God. This desire once throughly fixed in thy heart, thou shalt by degrees attaine to my vertue, through prayer, study, and diligent endeuour. And although at the beginning thou shalt endure some labour and paine: by striuing to subdue and master thy owne appetites: Yet persuere to the end, and thou shalt gette the victory. In somuch that thou shalt reioyce; when any thinge is said or done to thee, contrary to thy liking. Farther thou must by degrees inforce thy selfe to desire, to bee scorned despised and contemned. For it is most true that

no man can be humble, that is not iuſt. And hée that ſhall not deſire, to bée deſpiſed, contemned, mocked, and debaſed, this man cannot bée called iuſt. De. How may that bée, that whoſoeuer deſireth and wiſheth not to bée deſpiſed, ſhould bée ſaide to bée a man vn iuſt. For by that accompt, wée ſhall finde but few iuſt men, and in my opinion this cannot bée true. Virg. I will eaſily prooue what I haue ſaid. It cannot be denied but that hée is iuſt, which giueth to each man that which is right: if therefore man can challendg nothing elſe for himſelfe, but to bée contemned, ſcorned, mocked and debaſed; hee is not iuſt which deſireth, not to bée ſoe vſed. De. I would heare you proue that, and ſhew plainely how, nothing but contempt is due to men. Virg. I will. Firſt there is no queſtion, but that all that which is good, ought bee loued, honoured, deſired, and prayſed. and how much greater and better it is, ſo much the more it ought to bee loued: contrary wayes, that what ſo is naught, ought to be diſpiſed, hated, reiected, and ſuppreſſed. Now if it be true that euery man is ill, it followeth that of right hee muſt bee contemned, and diſpiſed. De. Tell mee how all men are to be ſaide to be naught. Vir. Onely G O D is good, therefore all men are naught.

De.

De. I cannot yeald to that conclusion. Vir. Logitians shall proue, that none is good but God: and whatsoeuer is not God is not good, but ill. And if man be ill, that all shame, reproach, and contempt is due to him.

Chap. XVI.

How all creatures are good, and yet none is good, but God himselfe

Desire. I am not yet resolued by thy alleaged reasons, considering thou saist that God is good, and that whosoeuer is not God, is not to bée saide good. And the holy Scripture saith, that God saw all thinges that he had made, that they were not onely good, but very good. Farther, considering God is good (as indeede he is the chiefe goodnesse it selfe, and the efficient cause, and beginning of all things created) all things that he hath made must of necessity be good, that the worke be answerable to the workman that made it, whereupon it followeth, that whatsoeuer God hath made must of necessity bée very good. Besides, considering man is the most excelent of all corporall creatures, it is plaine that he is not only good, but very good. And then if he bé good, by thy owne rule it followeth, that both honour and loue, are due to him. Vir. I will not maintaine a long disputation with thée, for that disagréeth with the rules of Humilitie

mility, only I will open what I haue said more at large, that thou maist better vnderstand my meaning. The Scripture sayth, that none is good but onely God, which is thus to be vnderstood, that only God is essentially good, and to be good is onely proper to him. And whatsoeuer he hath made, may be said to bee good, participating in goodnes, giuen to thē by God; for whatsoeuer goodnes they haue is Gods, not their owne: so when thou seest good giftes bestowed on any Creature from aboue, thou must honour and loue such a creature: but this honour and loue must be referred to God, and not to the creature. Therefore our selues and all creatures are to be loued of vs, because they be good in their essence, or being, as the creatures of God, & this is, to loue God in his creatures. Let not therefore any man desire to be praysed or honoured for his owne sake, but for the goodnesse which God hath bestowed on him: attributing and referring it all to God: For it is one thing that man hath from God, but another which hee hath of himselfe, from God he hath what good soeuer is, but from himselfe whatsoeuer is ill. He hath from God that he representeth and carrieth his image & likenes. But of himselfe through wicked life and euill maners, he is made altogether dislike to God. Also it is giuen to him by the grace of

God, to desire to bee good and endued with vertue: but of himselfe hee desireth ill, and doeth those things that most displease God. From hence wee learne that those things which are bestowed on man from above are greatly to be honoured, and highly to bée loued, which are the conditions of his creation, and his naturall blessings, and yet not to be loued for his owne sake, but for the honor of God: Contrary those things to be hated, which are in man himselfe, as his vices, offences, & all other imperfections: So that diuersly we honour and despise, loue & hate some things in one & the selfe same man: & be he endued with neuer so great vertue, & deuotion: yet let him be assured, that of himselfe he hath nothing that is good, & still let him desire that in regarde of the good giftes bestowed on him by God, be they vertue, deuotion, or other spirituall benefits, that God alone be honoured and loued for them, and that all prayse be giuen to him as to the fountaine of all goodnesse, but for the sinne in him, which he knoweth to bée his owne, let him desire to be despised, hated, and contemned of all men. This doing I say, hée is to bee accounted iust. But if euery iust man shall desire to be contemned after this sort, how great is the iniustice of a man defiled with sinne, not onely not to desire to bee contemned as I haue said: but to desire and la-

bour

bour to bee honoured and extolled: Let not therefore a wretched sinner thinke, and imagine that he hath shewed much Humility, in desiring to be contemned, or let him not be the better perswaded of himselfe therefore, considering the most holy, vertuous, and deuoutest man is bound of duety to desire as much.

Chap. XVII.

Of the same.

Desire was not a little pleased herewith, & saide to this Virgine. De. I beseech you Sister instruct and direct me, by what meanes I may attaine to this holy Desire. Vir. Two wayes there be, by which thou mayest obtaine it, which are the Loue of God, & a holy purpose, to abiect and embase thy selfe like to a laboring beast, to which holy purpose our Gouernesse hath wedded her selfe: and if thou wilt be ruled by my directions, thou shalt finde thy selfe not a little assisted therby. De. Most willingly will I be instructed by you. Vir. Then assure thy selfe, that the Loue of God whome I perceiue thou art so desirous to finde, hath no more dangerous & hurtfull enemy, then is thy own body: inure thou thy self therefore dayly to this custom that euery morning thou say to thy soule: let me see now my soule, how thou wilt this day hate thy body, which is so great an enemy to thy swéet Sauior and Creator Jesus,

and how much thou wilt desire, that it may bee despised, afflicted, tormented and scorned. At night likewise say thus againe. Now shew mee my soule how this day, thou hast despised thy body so rebellious against thy most sweete Lord Jesus, and how thou hast desired that it might bee afflicted and iniured of all men, and hast laboured that nothing bee pardoned it, but hast carried thy selfe most seuere against it: this doing, deare Brother, and still conuersing in these good thoughtes, and euer persceuering in this thy desire, this onely exercise in time will bring thee to an exceeding perfection of perfect Humility, and will teach how to ouercome, and put to flight the most dangerous enemy, and betrayer of thy soule, and in conclusion thou shalt thereby attaine, to so great hatred of thy selfe, that thou shalt wish and labour to be contemned and despised. And when hereafter thou shalt happen to bee contemned of some man, then sticke fast to mée, and forsake not my vertue, but with reioysing and thanks giuing to God, say thus to thy selfe. Now thanks bee to God who hath reuenged mee of my enemy. Desire being much contented with the direction of this Virgin, tooke leaue of her, and was brought into the chamber of an other daughter of Humility, whose name was Simplicity, who receiuing him louingly, was asked by him

her

her name, vertue and conditions. Sim. My name is Simplicity, My office and conditions is to behaue my selfe simply, sincerely, and plainely towards all men, and to conceiue no hurt or ill meaning of any thing, that I shall happen to heare or to see: but to thinke all things to bee done rightly and hollily, and to thinke ill of no body but my selfe: For I euer suspect and feare my selfe, and continually watch ouer my thoughts and desires, still looking into my selfe, and holding open the right eye of perfect wisedome, whereby I may eschew and auoide all euill, and our Mother Humility be made more strong in her vertue. De. What? is not Humility endued with all kinde of vertue, except thou hold, and keepe open thy eye. Simp. No considering Simplicity without Wisedome, is of no estimation, but hurteth rather then helpeth: for the Loue of God loueth no man, but such as shall come with true knowledge and wisedome.

Chap. XVIII.

Of the maners and conditions of Simplicity.

DESIRE. Now then I desire to be instructed by you my Sister, how and in what manner you behaue your selfe, simply towardes all sortes of people. Simpl. In three things which are, in thought, word, and deed. First I neuer vse to thinke vpon those

things, which are aboue my knowledge and capacity, neither desire I the honors, estimations and vanities of this world, but still persever in this humble thought, that I am the most abiect of all the world, & vnworthiest that liueth to be the seruant of God: thinking all other holy and vertuous, & replenished with all kinds of grace and vertue. Secondly, I resolue to vse no flattering, feined or deceitfull words, but a plaine affirmation, or else a denial, that is onely, yea, yea, or no, no, for whatsoeuer is more, proceedeth not of good, but from the rote & ground of vanity Thirdly, I haue determined to busie my selfe in no worldly, curious, or vain words, but in such onely as are simple, and yet necessary, lest thereby I be drawn to vanity or singularity, and thereby be expelled & kept out from hence: for to do an action simply, bringeth Humility of hart, but otherwise to doe is most full of perils. De. As how? Sim Thou shalt vnderstand Desire, that our gouernes and Lady mother Humility, hath set me here, & imposed this charge on me, to keepe safely in this Pallace two rare Iewels which are remaining here, which are, the one, purity of hart, the other Innocency: the value whereof is of so hie estéeme, that they cannot be prised according to their worthinesse. For the obtaining whereof this Pallace and the other seated in this desert,

were

were at the beginning founded and built. And what good soeuer we doe, is referred to the getting and kéeping these iewels: but if Curiosity Vanity, or Singularity should enter by the gate of our heart, our mouth, or else our action, they would steale and carry away both these iewels from vs: and therfore if any of our Virgins shal not imploy all their thoughts, words & workes to get and preserue these: we account them fools not vnderstanding what they vndertake.

De. Why doe you so carefully preserue these iewels, considering that by your profession you follow pouerty? It is dangerous lest you should offend in couetousnes, kéeping such vnnecessary and precious iewels, considering many poore people may starue through want of them.

Si. Herein thou art deceiued: for although in possessing louing, or desiring riches or goods, a man may sin in couetousnes, according to the intẽtion, for which he shall desire them, yet can there be no sin in possessing these iewels, in regard that we desire to kéepe & preserue thẽ only for the loue of God, therwith to honour & serue him, at such time as it shall please him to come hither amongst vs, or when we conuerse with him in his holy house: rust and canker consume & spoile other worldly iewels, but these that are kept & laide vp in our harts, no rust, no canker, no corruption can consume: for no man can see

them, but he, which doth possesse them. De. If he shall lay them open, cannot rust then hurt them? Simp. No, for if purposely he shew them, that others should see them, then doth not he possesse them any longer. For he that hath them doth not thinke hee hath them, but laboureth still that hee may get them. And many times our Saviour doth so bestow them, that he that hath them, doth not know he hath them. Which our most loving Lord doth to this intent, that presumption and selfe liking which lurke in mens harts, should not secretly steale them and take them away. Therefore whosoever doth most of all other possesse them: doth with all secrecy that he can conceale them, and hide them.

Chap. XIX.

How Purity of heart and Innocency may be preserued.

DESIRE much delighted with this discourse of Simplicity, said to her. De. Tell me by what meanes these precious Jewels may be preserued. Simp. There is one thing amongst others very necessary for novices and young folkes, and the same not unprofitable for those that be of more yeares, which is to flie and to locke, and to keepe close our gates from much company. For if a man will use the familiarity and fellowshippe of many, and take de-

delight to heare and to see many things, he shal hardly bee able to preserue these Iewels, for our minds may well be compared to a looking glasse, which representeth the liknesse of any thing set before it, or to ware which retaineth the impression of a Seale. De. But how can one flie or shut the doores, that liueth continually in a religious society: for such a person hath occasion to goe into many places, and the Gouernour commaundeth sometimes one thing, sometimes another, and such a party is enforced to talke with many, and often commaunded to conuerse with al sorts of people: for other waies he shall be accounted singular, and singularity although it be couered with a shew of holinesse and vertue: yet is it hatefull, and ought to bee eschewed and shunned. Simp. It is true as thou sayest, wee must heare, see, and say many things for obedience, which if wee did of our owne accord and desire, wee should offend. But when obedience and charity doe moue vs thereunto (prouided wee bee not negligent but doe our best endeauours) there is no doubt to be had for losing these Iewels. De. What must we doe in doing our endeauors? Sim. It is needfull that whosoeuer would keepe these Iewels of Purity & Innocency, & either for obedience or necessity cannot be secluded, nor liue in solitary or vnfrequented places, it is necessa-

rie

rie I say that he make me his companion, who trusting to my fellowship (trauaile he all the world about) yet needeth not feare to loose these Iewels. De. I desire you to explaine your meaning by similitudes, for so, such as bee but simple shall the better vnderstand you. Sim. It is requisite for a man that will haue Purity of heart and Innocency (which are the especiall meanes to attaine to all vertues, and by which we may readily come to all perfection, perfect charity, and the chiefe marke which we shoote at, that is the Loue of God;) It is necessary as I haue said to attain to these vertues, to flie conuersation, & shut the gates against company. If he cannot do so, then let him take me a companion, and in all things that he shall heare or see, still keepe me in his right eye. And when the left eye shall seeke to behold any thing, that may taste of couetousnes, or of wilfulnes, or of rash iudgement, then let him behold the same with the right eie of Simplicity, thinking & perswading thus simply with himselfe: that euery man and woman, brother & Sister: &c. is the Angell and Sonne of almighty God, and that all other things are certaine instruments or Organes, which without intermission do laude & praise their Creator, and by the same rule, what ill so euer he shall heare or see of his neighbor, let the right eye excuse it & conster it to the best: and

let

let him prayse & glorifie God for all his creatures, which the last eye of couetousnes shal allure him to desire, calling to minde the beautie, comelines and goodnes of his Creator, and all other his properties, saying thus to himselfe, I will not desire or loue any thing created to any other end, but that in them, and with them I may loue and prayse God, likewise in all his words and actions, it is very necessary that he associate himselfe with me. De. How shal we say, all the actions of mē are done in simplicity. Sim. When their intention shall bee simple, pure, and right, and all that they doe being of it selfe good, shall be also iust and right, in all circumstances of time, place and person, & shal not do any thing, but eyther for the honor & praise of God, or for the good of the soule or body of himself, or his neighbour, or else for the benefite of the whole cōmon wealth, he that doth this, walketh simply in all his actions: and whosoeuer shall chose & keep Simplicity, for his cōpanion, he liueth and walketh securely & happily.

Chap. XX.

Of Pouerty.

Desire much pleased with this discourse of Simplicity, taking his leaue of her was brought to the chamber of another of Humilities daughters, whose name was Pouerty, of whome being lovingly entertained, hée spake

to

to her as followeth. De. I am not a little delighted with your fellowship and acquaintance, assuring my selfe, how dearely you are beloued of the Loue of God, & therefore desire to know your conditions and course of life. Pou. I contemne and refuse for the Loue of God, to haue or possesse any worldly or transitorie goods. De. In what thing then consisteth your ioy and only comfort? Pou. My only treasure and riches is for the Loue of God, to be poore, and possesse nothing. De. I cannot but greatly maruaile thereat, considering that as I haue heard of others, this Pallace was first founded and built by a Lord, that is the most noble, rich and bountifull of all the world. What then should bee the reason or his intention, that the inhabitants of it should be so poore and needy: neither vnderstand I how your pouerty can bee so acceptable to him. Pou. I will tell you. That Lord, which is founder and builder of this Pallace, is King and Master of all the world, and hath, and keepeth his riches and treasures all in his owne hands. And yet notwithstanding, it is his will and pleasure, that we should liue in continuall pouerty, to the end we fixe not, or settle our loue and affection, on any other creature, but on himselfe. He could if it so pleased him, bestow abundance on vs: but to his best beloued, he doth not; because they

should

should loue him onely, and hate this world, and the vanities thereof. And wee cannot aske a more manifest token of his loue towards vs, then that hee suffereth vs to bee in necessity in this miserable life, & sendeth vs not those pleasures, which fraile flesh would couet. And yet farther, he will haue vs spend our liues in pouerty, least temporall and needles cares should ouercome our weake minds; but will, that wee should serue him, with quiet cõtented thoughts and not be moued, either with losse, or gaine of worldly commodities, or too much reioyce or lament, in prosperity, or aduersity, with ouer great mirth, or exceeding sorow: but haue our hearts still united to him, in peace, and contentation, without any mistrust. For such is the disposition of the Loue of God, that he will not inhabit, but in still and sequestred places. De. What is the especial vertue that is in your Po. To conforme and frame my selfe according to my sisters, amongst whom I liue. And although I desire to possesse nothing: yet to kéepe out and expell an enemy of ours, that séeketh daply to enter amongst vs, and destroy our garden, and eate vp our fruit, whose name is Singularity: our Lady Mother will haue me liue like my other Sisters. And yet that I lose not the reward of my vertue shee hath Married me to a holy Purpose, whose name is, to

aske

aske nothing. And farther, she telleth me if I will attaine to perfection, that I must rest content with that which is giuen me, be it much, or little; and accept as thankfully, of grosse and homely diet, as of that which shall be prouided at the costliest price, and to leaue part of that which is allowed to me, & to be content for the loue of God, to take so much only, as necessity shall desire De. That is as if one should desire to be better then good, or labour to do more then he were bound to doe. For if I rightly vnderstand it, that Lord which hath founded and erected this Pallace, commandeth you to haue the spirit of pouerty, as the Prophet saith. If thou abound in riches, beware thou settle not thy loue on them. Whereby I gather, that the vertue of pouerty, doth not consist in hauing, or possessing much, or little: but in the loue, or contempt we take in them. Po. I doe not deny, but that the spirit of pouerty consisteth in the minde, yet notwithstanding it is much safer for the Loue of God, to possesse nothing: considering our loue and affection to rich and beautiful things, is so frayle and prone, that hardly can we haue them, without fixing our loue on them. Least therefore such worldly riches should gaine some part of our loue from the Loue of God which is already but small towards him, it is good (as the saying is) to re-

moue

moue the straw farther from the fier. For the Loue of God, doth challenge of duety all the loue of man wholly to himselfe, and many there be that herein flatter themselues, saying, I doe not immoderately loue this or that thing, neither would I too much sorrow if it were taken from mée, But beléeue mée, affection, and loue is so subtill a thing, that hardly are men found not louing what they possesse. Neither can we haue a better example hereof then our Sauiour CHRIST himselfe, who when hee could haue possessed the whole riches of the world, without feare to loue or affect them extraordinarily: yet remember how néedily and poore, not only himselfe liued, but also his blessed Mother, and his holy Apostles. Which how canne we any other waies conceiue: but that wée must neither affect, or possesse any worldly riches: For which cause I haue clearely forsaken all such vnnecessary things, as I vsed to haue with me in my Chamber, retaining nothing else, but the Image of my swéete Sauiour hanging naked on the Crosse, thereby to remember his great loue to mee. I once vsed to keepe many bookes with mee but now possesse onely a Bible, the life of the Apostles, and the life of my Sauiour Iesus, with some fewe other for

my

my deuotions. And rest fully contented to meditate on sweete Iesus, and to busie my selfe, with the booke of his holy life.

Chap. XXI.

Of Obedience.

DEsire receauing no lesse contentment frō this Virgin, tooke leaue of her, and was brought to the Chamber of an other daughter of Humility, called Obedience. To her Desire yelded very great reuerence, in that shee seemed to him to be of high dignity, & authority & of great estimation with the Loue of God, and more beloued of him, then her other sisters. Now Desire for reuerence sake, offring to kisse her hand, was denied of her, in regard that being the daughter of Humility, she would not alow either reuerence, or honour, to be shewed to her, but willing Desire to sit downe by her, hee asked of her, her orders and conditions. Obedience. I am married to a holy Purpose, called, to omit nothing I ought to doe, Hee is a mighty, strong, and worthy Knight, who alone is able to subdue and put to flight, the most dangerous beast in all the world, called Selfe-will. Which beast doth destroy, kill, and swallow vp all that loue and obey her: and shee doth with a kinde of flattering allurement, entise & draw to her al obstinate people, of which few forsake her, vntil she draw them into hell, & bitter

bitter damnation. The greatest part of people, and almost all forsake me, notwithstanding it is most certaine, that without me, no man can find the Loue of God, who is a Lord of so great dignity and excellency, that the whole world cannot be compared with him: and in regard it hath pleased Almighty God to bestow so good and noble a husband on me, I doe not any thing but what hee shall commaund mee: neither doe I desire to be eased or remitted from that is commanded me, except some vrgent necessity constraine me thereunto: and in regard of theeues and robbers, which lie so secretly amongst vs, that hardly they can bee discried or discouered by vs I neuer dare to walke alone. De. What companion do you vse? Ob. First I take with me my dog for a companion, called as yours is Good-will. Next I ioyne to me my Sister Simplicity, and my daughters Deuotion, Chearefulnes, Diligence, Perseuerance and Purity, but chiefly our Lady mother Humility, both alwaies associate her selfe with me: al these of necessity must I haue with me, if I will securely walke to do that, which I am commanded. De. Tell me I beseech you, how doth your mother Humility ioyne her selfe with you, for that as yet I doe not vnderstand? Obed. In any thing that I vndertake and doe, be it neuer so great, I doe not

flatter my selfe that I haue done it wel, neither haue I any confidence in that I doe, or by doing any thing well, grow into pride of minde. Neither perswade I my selfe, that others could not doe it besides my selfe, or that they could not do it so well as my selfe, neither thinke I my selfe good, if I doe any thing that is good, or would bee praysed for doing it; or thought by others apt and fitte to doe it; but with all humility I giue the thanks to God, in that it hath pleased him, to bestow vnderstanding, wisedome and ability on me, for the loue of him to doe so good a thing. And I say to my selfe, in regard it hath pleased God to bestow his grace on me, to execute such a worke, for this thing especially I hold my selfe bound to him. And therefore desire I nothing else of others, but that they will honor and praise God. And that vntill the last day of my life, nothing but labour and pain be allotted to mee, all honour and prayse be to Almighty God, and benefite and all good vnto my neighbour. Nothing in this world as I say, I wish to my self: being assured, I deserue nothing that is good of my selfe, neither desire I any thing else, but that it would please our Lord to bestow his loue on me, that thereby I may dayly encrease in vertue and good life, and neuer offend him, but that in the last houre of my death, it will

please

please him (as I hope) to shew himselfe louing and mercifull to me.

Chap. XXII.
Of Chastity.

Desire taking great comfort in this conference with Obedience, leauing her, was brought to the chamber of the last daughter of Humility, whose name was Chastity, of whom as before Desire demanded her conditions. Cha. I am as thou knowest the daughter of Humility of heart, & haue attending on me two Virgins or handmaids, the one called Abstinence, the other Bashfulnes. My spouse or husband is called Watch of heart, who is alwayes attended with a boy, called Watch of senses. De. I beseech you bring mee to the sight of this Boy. Chast. I will doe that willingly. Desire now much maruailed at the furniture of this Boy, for in his hand hee helde a bridle and a stone, a kerchiefe or a baile, and a Chaine with a Locke, to whome hee thus spake; I desire thee my Sonne to declare to me the true signification of this furniture of thine. Boy. This Bridle is to restreine a naughty beast of my Masters, which although hee be little, yet when hee breaketh loose, hee ouerthroweth all men, neither can

any man rule her but our Porter the Feare of God. De. What is the name of this naughty beast? Boy. The tongue. De. What dost thou with this stone? Boy. I stoppe holes with it, which are in this house, called the Eares, lest théeues enter thereat, as often they doe, when it chanceth that they bee not stopped; and sometimes also, I put it in my mouth, that thereby I may enioyne my selfe to silence. De. By that meanes, others will say thou art dumbe. Boy. I am not dumbe, but for the Loue of God, I make my selfe dumbe. De. What seruice canst thou shew to him thereby? Boy. Much, considering that by this doore those two iewels are lost, which Simplicity spake of, I meane Innocency & Purity of hart, and so long as I continue dumbe, I prouide that the Wine which our Virgins vse, runne not out or bée shedde. De. What couldest thou not looke to that, if thou shouldest speake? Boy. No, For the Spygot cannot bée pulled out, but the Wine will bée shedde. De. Might not a vessell be set vnder to saue the wine that runneth out. Boy. There might, but great wisedome, vnderstanding, and fortitude is to bée vsed. And I am yet but little and young, neither can easily perform that office, and so soone, all the Wine might runne out of the vessell, and nothing but winde

remains

remaine in it. De. What signifieth this kerchiefe or vaile? Boy. It is called Purity, and it serueth to couer the left eye, which causeth sensuality. De. Do you couer the right eye also? Boy No, for that is the eye of Simplicity, which not onely doth not hurt, but also bringeth forth all good and fruitful things: but the left, is the eye of Sensuality, which is of a more sharpe sight then the right, and annoyeth vs with many discõmodities: & finally bringeth death it selfe, wherefore it is of necessity, that it be couered with this vaile, that therby we may perceiue al things with purity. De. Deliuer it more plainely, how we may see al things more purely and clearely. Boy. All things are seene with a pure heart, when they are beheld with one of these three eyes. Either with the eye of taking good edification for our selues, or with the eye of honoring & glorifying God, or with the eye of excusing and pitying our neighbour. De. This yet is obscure, declare your meaning more plainely, Boy. I know thou dost vnderstand me sufficiently. De. Although my selfe vnderstand it, yet peraduenture others would expect to be instructed more plainly. Boy. I allow this will and desire to profite others, to be both vertuous & worthy praise, considering it is a signe of no small vertue and charity, both to seeke our own good and benefit, and also that

which may be the good of al men: and thou hast heard many things spoken in parables among vs, the exposition whereof, is both profound & fruitfull; therefore when thou shalt returne hither againe, thou maiest make a certaine commentary of such things as thou hast heard and seene: whereby thou maiest draw them out more at large, and (as S. Greg. did vpon holy Iob) explaine them more copiously. De. You say well, & doubt not, but (God assisting me) I will performe as much: for notwithstanding to the learned, these similitudes may serue without farther explanation: yet to the simple sort, it will be necessary to haue a more plaine exposition: and it will be a very great encouragement to me to vndertake it: if I be aduised to it by your counsell: but now proceede to tell the meaning of your furniture. Why doe you carry this chaine with a locke? Boy. It is called Temperance of the mouth, wherewith wee locke the gates of this house, least the Virgins that dwell here might wander abroad, for if we had not this chain & this locke, there would bee no religion among vs, but all things would be vaine: and this know for certaine, so long as I keepe my left eye couered, although my eyes be open, yet I see nothing. De. How can that bee that your eyes being open, yet you should not see? Boy. Because my eyes are fixed in my head, &

although

although sometime I loke down to the earth, yet the reflection of my eyes returneth to my head.

Chap. XXIII.

The conclusion of the first part.

DEsire hauing discoursed after this manner with Chastity, departed from her with great contentment, & being guided out of this Pallace by the forenamed Steward, who told him he had now seene all the Virgins of this Pallace, hee asked if there were no other thing to be seene. Stew. If thou wilt well obserue what thou hast here heard and seene, and shalt with thy best endeauour seeke to put them in execution, thou art sufficiently furnished to find out the Loue of God. But yet before thou depart hence, I wil shew thee a tree that groweth in our garden. Desire beholding this goodly tree, beganne much to admire it, and the rather, because it carried two sorts of fruit, and said to the Steward: De. What kind of fruite is this? Stew. The fruit that groweth on the lower boughes, which are pale, & of diuers colours, is called Distrust of our selues: but that which groweth on the top of the tree, & is of a pleasant red colour, is called Trust in God, with which fruit al that come hither are to be fed; for except they shall feede vpon this fruit their labour is in vaine, and to no ende come they hither. De. Will it please you to beſtow part thereof

on me, that I may eate thereof in my iourney, I am to take. Stew. I will: eate of the fruit of the lower boughes which is Distrust of thy selfe, as much as shall be necessary, and fill all thy pockets with the fruit of the higher boughes, that thou maiest eate thereof in thy iourney, and this will serue thee, vntill thou come to the house of the Loue of God. Now Desire sufficiently satisfied with the fruit of the low boughes, filled his pockets and bosom with the fruit of the higher boughes, and said. De. I beseech you Sister, now shew to mee the speediest and most ready way to the house of the Loue of God. Stew. I reioyce to see thee so furnished, and desirous to vndertake the iourney to finde the Loue of God. Yet notwithstanding, I feare if thou trauaile alone, thou wilt hardly find out the readiest way, therefore will I giue thee trusty companions of our society, who shall go, and guide thee the right way thou art to take. De. Is not Good-will my dogge sufficient for that? Stew. No truely, for although he be very good, yet is not he sufficient for such a iourney, wherein are encountred not onely many dangerous wilde beasts, hollow pits, rough wayes, bushes and briers: but theeues, spoylers and robbers, and such as seeke to kill and destroy all passengers, wherefore it is wisedome not to trust, to thy dogge

alone.

alone. De. For these alleadged reasons, I pray you, appoint mee such companions as you thinke necessary. Stew. Then take in thy company our Porter, the Feare of our Lord, who is a worthy and excellent man, whose company if thou wilt not forgoe, take likewise with thee his daughter Bashfulnes, whome to be sure to keepe, take an hearbe with thee, called Humble casting downe of thy eyes: and yet farther take with thee an other companion called Simplicity. And now Desire goe on thy way being garded with Gods blessing. But yet marke well this one lesson, although thou chance to loose the Feare of God, or Simplicity; yet be sure to keepe warily thy dogge about thee, for hee will serue to finde them againe: and see that thou giue him of the fruit in thy pocket, to eate of. And when thou art gone hence, keepe the way which leadeth on the left hand, where thou shalt finde a path, which is a nearer way then others, which will bring thee directly to the house of Charity, wherein dwelleth the Loue of God. De. What is the name of that path, that if I happe to misse my way, I may aske it of others. Stew. It is called Patience, which is the ready and neareſt way to the house of Humilitie and Charitie.

THE

THE SECOND PART.

CHAP. I.

Of Patience.

Desire being now wel refreshed with the aboue named fruites and accompaned with Good-will his dogge, and the Feare of God the Porter on the one side, and with Simplicity on the other side, and having also his pockets filled with the fruit of Confidence in God, departed chearefully out of the house of Humility, & willingly vndertooke the way of Patience: which although he were told to be short and pleasant: yet found hee it rough, hard and vnpleasant: by reason of many brambles and bushes, which made him complaine, and say to Simplicity. De. O good God how hard and difficult a way is this, contrary to that I thought it to bee. Simp. Let not that seeme strange to thee Desire, for therefore is it called the way of Patience, which if it were not sharpe and full of difficulties, it should not be called and knowne by that name, neither should the house to which it leadeth be held in so great esteeme, if the way were plaine and easie, and passable for all people: but as it is, none passe it but those that be through-

throughly exercised. And hast thou not heard the olde Prouerbe, That no good thing can be obtained without labour and paine: or pleasant, but first by tasting the sower? wherefore hauing now vndertaken and entred the way, thou must of necessity endure the hardnes, comforted with this, that it will not long continue. For whosoeuer will seeke to take the fish, must bee contented to wet his foote. And couldest thou imagine, that a thing so precious as the Loue of God, could bee obtained without labour and paine? Remember the saying of Seneca the Philosopher: A thing of worth cannot bee bought for a trifle: For with great labours wee atchieue great matters: And thou art deceiued, Desire, if thou thinke to get so rich a treasure with no labour neither wouldest thou make any great account of the Loue of God, if thou couldest finde him without any trauaile. Goe too therefore courragiously, and feare not labour, considering that after it, thou shalt rest and be comforted with the Loue of God, and thou wilt esteeme the greatlier of him and loue him better; for the more paine thou endurest in finding him out, the greater will bee thy ioy and contentment after. And if thou fortune to bee wearie in the way, eate of the fruite which thou hast, called Confidence of God, and thou

shalt

shalt finde thy selfe to bee strengthned againe: but if thou wilt not feele the wearisomnesse of thy iourney, do as trauailers do that passe ouer the paine with singing as they go. Desire somewhat comforted with this direction of Simplicity said. De. How can we sing being accompanied with this reuerend and graue old father. Sim. It is his custome to shew himselfe graue in gesture and apparrell, but otherwise hee is sociable & pleasant in conuersation, for he is the brother of the Loue of God, & singeth sweetly, especially when hee heareth vs sing, not for wantonnesse and leuity, but to cheare vp our spirits, and comfort our selues being weary in our iourney. De. How shall I sing that haue no voyce. Simp. Thou canst not lacke voyce, that art a voyce thy selfe. Desire maruailed to heare her say he was a voyce, and answered. De How can you say that I am a voyce? Simp. Thou, as all other Creatures wast created by Gods word, and it is plain that a voyce doth follow a word, considering therefore that so soone as God had spoke the word, presently all creatures were made: it followeth that all creatures are voyces. De. Explaine this yet more plainly. Sim. Speech and the word are but one thing: for speech is not that which is deliuered with the mouth, but that which being conceiued in the mind is retay-

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ned within. But that which is expressed with the mouth, is a voice, declaring the speech or word conceiued in the heart. As for example, if I conceiue such a thought in my minde, that thou art a man, this is a word or speech, and although I vtter it not, yet I hold it within mée. But if I shall expresse it with my mouth, & say thou art a man, this is a voyce, explaining the secret conceite of my minde, De. If I bee a voice, whose voice am I? Sim. Thou art the voice of God, by whom thou wast created to his praise, honour & glory. De. What thing then doe I speake of my selfe, if I bee a voyce. Sim. Thou sayest God is good, by the goodnesse of that essence, which thou hast of God, euen so by thy owne beauty, thou giuest a witnesse that he is beautifull, through whose beauty thou hast attayned to such goodnes and beauty: to conclude, whatsoeuer God hath created in thée, it is but a certaine voyce explayning the vertue and goodnesse of him. De. How can you say that, whatsoeuer is in me created by God is a voice: and not absolutely whatsoeuer is in me is a voice. Sim. Thus, thy sins and wickednes which God hath not made, are not his voices, but thy owne, which speake and declare that thou are filthy, naught, impure and wicked. For as by the creatures of God we are led and brought to the knowledge of

him

him: so by those things which we do our selues we may attaine to the knowledge of our selues.

Chap. IJ.

How God may be known by his creatures.

Desire noted this discourse of Simplicity, not without great admiration, who although she seemed in shew but simple: yet could be her most wise in these high and secret misteries, & said to her. De. To what end would you haue vs to sing? Sim. To the end we may forget the difficulties, and sorrowes of this miserable banishment we liue in, and lose not our hope to come to the house of Gods Charity. Wherunto to attaine, we shall find no smal helpe in meditating vpon Gods creatures, which purposely I haue placed in this iourney of Patience that thou maiest the sooner come to the Loue of God, if thou shalt be cōuersant in this booke of his creatures. For by Patience we conceiue a greater hope of the diuine scripture, which is the whole world, which is no other thing then the booke of God. De. Considering then that we must sing, let vs do that for which cause we are made voices, that is, let vs praise God. Si. I am well contented, for so many voices wil ioyne with vs in singing. Sometime descant sometime the Tenor, sometime the Treble wil meet vs, & in the beginning the basse, in the midest the tenor & descant, in the end the treble and all sorts of voyces, according to the multitude

of variety of creatures; farther it is necessary (if we will do according to the prescript of musicke) that wee endeuour to bee skilfull in our song, for considering we haue voyces, we must learne & vnderstand the knowledge of singing De. Who shall teach vs that? Sim. Our owne voices. For some creatures shall declare his power and highnes, others his goodnes, others his wisedome, others his gentlenes, other his beauty, others his sweetnes, others his greatnes, others his iustice, & others his liberality: & to this end God hath bestowed on vs a kind of knowledge of himselfe, according to euery mãs capacity, & nature, that thereby thee may sing & deliuer his praise. For which cause I entreate thee, endeuour in this thy iourney to become as expert in singing as thou canst, & the rather because in the house of the loue of God, to which thou dost trauaile, there is nothing but singing whither when thou shalt come. I would haue thee sufficiently instructed in this art. For whosoeuer shall haue a good voyce in this iourney, & shall often exercise it, it is thereby so amended, that it cãnot change. And as euery mã through daily exercise shall learne to sing in this life, so shall hee bee there more excellent then others. De. Teach me I pray you how I may sing by Gods creatures, for of my selfe I shall not easily learne it. Sim. I will willingly doe it. Now mean time desire hauing trauailed far through

the desert: learned and proued many ſuertues and excellencies of our Lord and Sauiour Ieſus Christ, and the better, by the ayde, aſſiſtance, and direction of his guide Simplicity. Yet was he to paſſe many great, dangerous, & hard labours: oft did he ſtumble, but Simplicity ſupported him that he could not fall. Notwithſtanding ſomtimes hee fell, but preſently Simplicity gaue him her hand. Somtimes hee fell ſo dangerouſly, that except hee had beene lifted vp againe by the helpe of the Feare of God he neuer would, or could haue roſe again. Sometimes when he ſhould goe forward, he retyred backe, and when hee ſhould haue receiued benefit by Gods creatures, he became much worſe. For he was not ſufficient carefull to try out the ſecret vertues of hoyces, neither did he greatly regard his ſong, but ſuffered himſelfe to growe hoarſe, vntill being pricked and put forward with the Feare of God, he laboured to goe forward. Oft times did thornes and buſhes run into his feet, but Simplicity holde him vp, and the Feare of God plucked them out againe. Sometimes was he much oppreſſed with ſleepe, but the Feare of God awaked him againe. Oft time being weary, hee ſate downe to reſt him, but Good will his dogge neuer left barking, vntil he aroſe againe. Sometime was he ſo weary, that through inconſtancie of mind

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he determined to goe backe, but presently eating of the fruite in his pocket, hee recouered strength and kept on his way. Sometimes as he trauailed in the darkenes of the night, he lost both the Feare of God and Simplicity, so that he wandred out of the right way of his iorney, but so soone as the sunne beganne to shine, by the helpe of his dogge he found his way again: now after they had trauailed thus many daies, they came to a pleasant & delightfull meadow, in the middest whereof was seated a princely Pallace, called the house of Charity, the Porter whereof was the Loue of God.

THE THIRD PART.

CHAP. I.

Of the Probation and exercise of the Loue of God.

When Desire had beheld this goodly Pallace, he reioyced much, that his long wearisome, and painefull iourney, was come at last to so ioyfull an end. Wherefore comming to the gates, and finding them locked, hee beganne to call and knocke thereat: But notwithstanding his calling and knocking, no man appeared that would giue him

an answere. Then spake Simplicity, and told him it were requisite that he cried lowder, for by that meanes hée should be heard, although they within were a sléepe, or else deafe, and bid him take the two hammers that hung at the gate, and presently some would come and open it for him. These two hammers were called, the one to Sigh, the other to Crie. Therefore héé bid him knocke and crie alowd, for these doores should not be here if they were not to be opened, and therefore are these hammers hanged at them, that such as shal knocke may bee admitted in. Thus continued Desire stil crying and knocking long, before the Loue of God would open the gate, neither did Desire as yet know him; to whome the Loue of God at length spake as followeth: what séeke you here brother, or what lacke you to knocke and call thus? peraduenture you are wearie with your long expectation; but it is our custome and manner to seigne our selues deafe, thereby to trie their patience that come hither. And it chanceth often, that when wee sée any ware weary and perswade themselues that the gate must be opened to them, so soone as they come: we suffer them to depart euen as they came, for none are admited to enter hither that shall thinke themselues worthily to deserue the place, & that we ought to receiue them of right

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and duety. Therefore tell me, art thou one of those? De. No sir, I am not. For notwithstanding I haue passed & ouercome many labours, yet am I sure, that I haue no way deserued to be admitted in here, but altogether vnworthy except it shal please you to receiue me vpō your owne goodnes & mercy. Loue &c. What is the cause thou desirest to be admitted? or what seekest thou to finde here within this house. De. I am come sir hither from the house of Humility, accompanied with these graue & honest companions, & haue passed my iorney by the path of Patience, only to seeke the Loue of God, who as it is told me dwelleth here within. Loue. Dost thou bring me no token whereby I may know that thou cōmest from the house of Humility? De. I bring two tokens, the one whereof was giuen me in the house of Humility, & it is called Knowledge of my selfe, the other haue I got my selfe in my iorney, & that is called Knowledge of God. Loue &c. I am very well pleased to see thee so prouided, but yet tell me this one thing, dost thou perswade thy selfe, that by reason of these two knowledges we ought of duety to receiue, and admit thee. De. Be it far from me to haue such a thought, I desire to be receiued only through your grace and mercy: for I am not sure whither both these knowledges wherwith I am instructed be

truely written or no. This I know for certain, that I continued sometime in the house of Humility, and there I learned & knew the house, the virgins, and their conditions, they themselues telling me: but whether I haue well digested the fruit I eate there, or whether they agrée well with my stomack, although they bée swéete in taste, I confesse I know not, neither am I sure, whether I reaped any benefit by my iourney: for often did I fall, the bushes and brambles oft pricked me, and in a manner I was drawn hither by force of my compantons; therefore sir, there is none of these things, that I bring with me, that I can tell you any certainely of, but mine owne malice, vilenesse, loath and imperfections. And amongst other things which cause me to come hither to seeke the Loue of God, one especiall cause is, that I vnderstand he is a singular good Chirurgion, of whom I desire to be purged, & to bee let blood: and farther, men say, that with his onely looke he presently discouereth the imperfections and faults in the heart, & whosoeuer he toucheth he doth presently cure. Loue &c. Why doest thou desire to be made so pure & sound? De. Because (as I haue learned of others) it is allowed to none to enter in hither that shal be vnclean, but to such as shall bee onely pure, sound and vndefiled. Loue &c. Considering then that

thou

thou puttest thy whole trust and confidence in vs, stay here a while, for thou canst not enter in, or speake with the Loue of God, except first thou talke with a Boy of his: tarry here therefore, and I will call the Boy, who will direct thée what thou art to do, and how thou mayest come to the speech of his Master.

CHAP. II.

Of the loue of our Neighbour.

HEre Desire stayed, expecting greatly the comming of the Boy, that should bring him in to the speech of his master, who presently came forth, his name was called the Loue of our Neighbor, whom when Desire beheld, he could not through ioy refrain from weeping for the exceeding great loue hee carried to his Master. Loue &c. What is the cause that thou weepest thus, considering in this house all are chearefull and merry, and none is heard to weep or lament? De. Ioy not sorrow maketh me to weepe. Loue &c. Who doe you seeke for here? De. The Loue of God. Loue &c. I am his Boy, therfore if thou seekest my master thou must first talke & be acquainted with me, for my M. maketh so great account of me that he will not speake with those that loue not me. De. I most willingly would learne and know thy conditions, and for the loue of thy M. bee acquainted with thee. Loue &c. If thou

wouldest be admitted amongst the number of my friends: thou must euery morning giue mee in stead of my breakfast, a certain sawce called Humble thought, and an other at noone, called Humble speech, and a third at euening, called Humble worke. De. Where shall I find out or get these sawces? Lou. Humility & her husband Holy Purpose maketh the first, which is Humble thought, wherby she thinketh and esteemeth her self more vile, base & inferiour then any other, and accounteth of her selfe no better then a labouring beast. This Holy Purpose prepareth a certaine Electuary for Humility, called Contempt of our self, and to make this sawce which we now speake of, an other hearb is to be added, called Good opinion of our neighbor, of which compounds hūble thoght is made: & in all this prouince is not a skilfuller man to make this sawce, then the forenamed husband of Humility, whome so soone as thou shalt get thy friend, he will instruct thee how to make this sauce: the other called hūble speech is made & compounded of three other hearbes, which are, Humility, Gentlenes, & Affability which must be strowed with a fine powder called Slownes and Sparing: the third which is humble worke, is compounded of many herbs: the chiefe wherof, are Chearefulnes, Loue & Diligence: when thou shalt bring mee these three sawces to eate, then shall our friendship &

familiarity be firme, & soone after will I bring thee to the spæch of my M. Desire much delighted with this direction of this boy, saide to him. De. Considering you haue acquainted me with your condition & desire, I wil labour to make those sawces, & giue them to you: thus Desire continued long in cõference with this boy, treating & discoursing many matters with him, & began to be familiar with him, & deliuering to him the forenamed sauce, at last he desired him to open the gate, that thereby he might haue accesse to his M. Loue. Thy request is reasonable, considering thou doest what lieth in thy power, stay but a little, I will goe call my M. and sée if he will come forth to speake with thée.

Chap. III.

Of the Loue of God & our neighbor and of an other degree of loue, and of the office and exercise thereof.

NOw Desire began to thinke thus with himself, whither the Loue of God would come forth to talk with him or no, considering he was so vile, miserable, & wretched, & altogether vnworthy, with whome so great a Lord should vouchsafe to talk, & whilst he was thus debating with himself, he perceiued one cõming towards him, who asked him what he wold or with whom he wold speake. De. Sir, I séeke to speak with ỹ loue of God. Lo. I am he, which

soone as Desire heard, he fell to the ground, hauing lost his strength: then the Loue of God taking him by the hand, rayſed him from the ground, which made Desire to weepe ſo abundantly for ioy, that hardly could hee pronounce any word: whereat the Loue of God being tender of heart, through the compaſſion he had of him began to weepe alſo, noting the great loue and good will which Desire had towardes him, and ſaid. Loue &c. Ceaſe off to weepe, for I cannot without griefe behold the teares of him that loueth me, but tell mee, who tolde thee, that I was abiding in this houſe. De. A certaine ſhepheard, that I mette on the way, who directed me to this place, where I ſhould finde you. Loue &c. What did hee tell thee concerning mee, and what is the cauſe why thou loueſt me ſo greatly, and haſt ſo great a deſire to finde me out? Is it becauſe thou haſt heard of others, that I beſtow many great gifts on my friends, I vſe to reward with great benefits ſuch as ſerue and obey me? De. No, but for this cauſe doe I loue you, becauſe you are a good, a noble and a famous Lord. And becauſe you bring your friendes and ſeruants to the place where they may ſee and beholde God, then the which there is no greater happineſſe and felicity in the world. The Loue of God hearing what Deſire had ſaid, was much

pleaſed

pleased to heare his holy purpose & entent, and began to loue him now more then before: to whom Desire said, I cannot sufficiently marualle my Lord that you being so mighty & potent a Lord, and the sonne of so great a King, admit such as follow & seeke after you, to find you with so great labor & difficulty. Loue. Do not so: for this is a mistery not known to all men: for many there bee that thinke they haue not found, or know not mee, when not withstanding, I am neare vnto them, and they themselues abound with me: and againe there be others that perswade themselues, that they haue found and obtained mee, when notwithstanding they be farre from me, and haue not the least knowledge and vnderstanding of mee. De. I beseech you acquaint mee with your conditions and office, that I may vnderstand whither I be neare or farre off from you, for I holde and esteeme of you, as of my Lord and friend. Loue &c. My office and duety is to loue God, for I am called the Sonne of the knowledge of God. De. How doe you loue God? Loue &c. I haue a vehement desire to loue him with all my heart, with all my strength, and with all my power, and with auoyding any thing, whereby I may serue him in such manner as may please him, in referring al things to his honour, praise, and glory, and

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the health and benefite of my owne soule. And likewise doe I wish that the whole world may know and vnderstand him for his exceeding great goodnes, and that al creatures may honour him, and yéld him dayly thanks: and I enforce my selfe with my earnest desire, that neither in great or small things, much or little I offend or displease him, or that I doe any thing contrary to his pleasure: and if through mine owne frailety and imbecility, I chance to offend him, I presently craue and aske forgiuenes of him, and by that meanes our loue is repayred againe. And although my Lord and Master be so good, so noble, and so gracious to me, yet am I not content with this first steppe and degree, but yet proceede farther, and according to my power and abilitie, endeuour to execute, not onely what he commaundeth, but whatsoeuer the meanest in this Pallace shall commaund mee in his name. And this accustome I my selfe to doe, with all reuerence, deuotion, loue, ioy, humility, and ready will, and that euer, in all places, and in euery good action. And hereby doe I know how greatly I loue him, whē I do that thing which hee commaundeth mee. For thus I perswade my selfe, that nothing in the world is so gratefull to him (bee it to talke with him, doe him reuerence, or to shew all ser-

seruice to him) as to doe that thing which eyther himselfe or some other shall command mee in his name. For my Lord and Master saith, thus to me. How thinkest thou that thy services can bee acceptable to mee, or that thou canst bee loued of mee, if thou doest not that which I shall commaund thee to do? Or how canst thou say thou louest me. For this know for certaine, that in no other thing thou canst so vnite thy selfe to mee, or conforme thy will so neare to mine, as if thou willingly and gladly execute what I commaund thee.

Chap. IIII.

The Loue of God proceedeth in his Discourse.

IN this degree of Loue, I haue resolued with my selfe to performe whatsoeuer I holde my selfe bound to, by my vocation and office. For since I first professed my selfe (of which I neuer repent me) I hold my self by calling bound to performe that, which before I might either haue done or omitted. And for that cause I vse diligently to thinke vpon my duetie and office, resoluing and determining still with my selfe, to execute and discharge, whatsoeuer I am bound to by vertue of it, according to the direction of holy Writ, and Learned men: being most assured, that many offend through ignorance of that, which they are bound

to by duety. And if they know what they ought to doe, and yet neglect and omit it, then is their offence farre greater and more grieuous: for then they offend through malice, and not ignorance. Farther such things as I haue vowed and promised to do (which to performe I am bound by duety) those with all my endeauours I labour to execute. And I haue promised and vndertaken to my Lord and Master, to keepe for euer the faith, I haue giuen to three Virgins which abide and dwell in this Pallace, which are Obedience, Chastity, & Pouerty, which three he hath giuen and assigned me as wiues, therefore morning & euening I consider with my selfe, how that day following I may best serue & please them, saying to my soule Let me see now my soule, how thou wilt endeauor with thy selfe this day to obey and please these Virgins, and at night shew me my soule, how thou hast performed this day, what thou diddest promise to doe toward these Virgins, & whither thou hast grieued or offended any of them. Thus doe I still endeauour, to shew my selfe a faithfull seruant to them. De. Wherefore do you thus? Loue &c. Because these bee the Chamber-keepers of my Lord and Master, and none are admitted or can talke with him, except these Virgins procure him entrance. De. Tell me I pray you, what spirituall exercises

ercises haue you, whereby you serue and kéepe promise with these Virgins. Loue &c. Three things I propounde, and determine to my selfe, which night and day I offer vp to them, and which constraine me to serue, and be obedient to them. The first is called, To aske or demand nothing. The second, To couet or desire nothing. The third, To thinke on nothing This first Purpose of mine serueth Obedience if so be, it be seasoned with a sauce called To do, & then may you call it to aske to do nothing. With which food Obedience is sustained, and by how much more abundantly & purely I offer this vp, by so much the more am I in grace, & fauour with my Lord, & the greater affection doth he carry to mee. This selfe same food, called To aske, if I season it with another sawce, called To haue, is called, To aske or desire to haue nothing, and with that do I feed the second Virgin, called Pouerty. De. Stay here a while I pray you. May I not aske to haue any thing that I want, and haue néed of? Loue. &c. No, except the thing, you desire bee most néedfull. For if there be any thing necessary for thée to haue, thou hast thy gouernor, who by himselfe or his official shal prouide for thée, that thou néedest not aske what thou maiest not lawfully aske. For hee whose charge it is to looke to the whole house: will prouide necessaries for

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all as it becommeth the gouerner, to the intent they may more freely serue GOD and attend their spirituall meditations, neither shall there be neede that any aske or craue such thinges as be necessary for them. And it shall bee no little fault in the gouernour to want that discretion, as not to giue thinges necessary for those vnder his charge except they demãd them. Therfore that which I said of asking or demanding, ought to bee doubly vnderstood; that without offending one may aske, if such things as shall bee necessary, bee not giuen without asking, which thing may iustly bee reprehended, especially in Religious persons, and if it bee a thing of great necessity, and not rather to satisfie our contentment. For in asking otherwise it may proceede from superfluity, curiosity, or some other temptation. And assure thy selfe that vnder a colour of necessity, many vices are often couered, especially in thinges that appertaine to the sustenance of the body, as meate, drinke, cloathing, and such like. De. How shall I know whither, that which I desire proceede of necessity or rather to satisfie my contentment? Loue &c. If thou maist forbeare that which thou askest, and if thou canst liue without it and art not constrained to suffer some great or notable hurt in thy body or thy soule, which may hap to thee in not asking. For if thou shalt bee

sure

sure in not flattering thy selfe that in not asking some great perill or danger may happen to thee then not to aske is a great offence, and to aske, well done, if thou referre it to God. But if thou maist conuenientlye liue without that, which thou askest, and endure no great hurt or danger thereby, admit thou suffer some labour or griefe in forbearing it, prouided still thou exceede not the boundes of discretion; in this case not to aske, although that which thou askest bee somewhat needefull, it shall bee well done of thee. and a token of thy vertue, although without offending thou mayest aske as I haue saide. For happy in my opinion is the man that suffereth any thing for the Loue of God. But if that which thou wilt aske, be but such a thing which without hurt of thy body or soule thou mayest easily misse: thou maist thinke then, that to aske is but to satisfie thy mind and pleasure, although it bee couered with a pretext of some holy purpose. For sinne doth not alwaies shew it selfe openly, but is shadowed often with a colour of holinesse. And thus maist thou know if thou askest any thing, whither it proceede of necessity or an vnsatisfied will. And least thou bee deceiued through thy partiall Iudgement it will bee necessary for thee, to keepe a diligent watch ouer thy selfe, and to bee exercised in vertue. Which if thou doest not,

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it will be good, that thou bee ordered by the aduise of discreet men, and holy Scripture.

CHAP. V.

Of the other two Purposes of the Loue of God, to wit, to desire nothing, and to thinke on nothing.

LOue, &c, Hauing breefely explained my first Purpose: wherwith the first two Virgins, Obedience and Pouerty, are as I haue saide before nourished, I must shew, and declare to thée the conditions of the other two, To desire nothing, & To think nothing. Know therfore for most certaine that this former Purpose to ask nothing, is grounded vpon the second, To desire nothing. For it is most certain that To haue, proceedeth onely from To desire. Then the cause take away, which is to desire, the effect fayleth, which is to aske. And by that is effected that which is contrary to this, which is Not to ask. This is the other Purpose wherwith Chastity is nourished, which is the third virgin, whose office is, To desire no worldly nor carnal thing. But because this herbe hath an other root, frō whence it springeth, which is to think on nothing, (for the thing cannot bee desired, which is not first thought on) I adioyne a third purpose, which is to thinke nothing. But in this place, to think, must be vnderstood of that thought, which is perseuerant, & setled, with

with a consent & liking of reason and will. For to thinke nothing, doth not consist in the power of man. But it resteth in man not to continue, or persevere in il thoughts: but sone to collect himselfe and to turne to God. Now when this hearbe To thinke, is watred with the water, called to See. We must then adde to these holy Purposes a certain pouder that is called, Strict gard of our eyes. For this is most necessary. These three Purposes, doe not only purge and make cleane my soule from al worldly affaires, from all selfe-will & from all spot and staine, but besides (that I may with greater zeale serue my Lord God) procure me great purity of heart & rid me of all priuate affection and loue, & ioyne, and vnite mee wholy to my Lord God and Sauiour. And to these three Purposes I haue reduced all my other spirituall exercises, as well those which are appertaining to Humility: as such as are agreeable to all other vertues, because I know, perfection to consist in them. And suffer not thy selfe to bee perswaded that in vaine, I yelde obedience to these three Virgins, for I find their fauour and goodnes great towards me, who plentifully bestowe on mee all kind of goodnes. The one of them called Pouerty, hath lately bestowed on me a rich ornament. De. I desire to see it, where doe you keepe it? Louc &c. I keepe it in two places,

in my heart, and in my chamber. And it is so great, and of so high estimation, that I could not possibly keepe it in my heart, vntill I banished, and vtterly excluded thence all worldly loue, affection, and desire: neither could it possiblie be contained in my chamber vntill I had cast thence all superfluous things, reserving onely the Bible, and some few other bookes.

De. What is the name of this ornament? It is called Nothing at all, and it is the especiall and chiefest treasure of Pouerty who is the richest Ladie of all the world, and who possesseth so much treasure, as her selfe doth desire.

Chap. VI.

Of the office of the Loue of God, and of prayer in the same degree.

IN this foresaid office of Loue, which is to doe that which my Lord and Master commaundeth, and my duetie bindeth me to, I must vse a certaine condition or circumstance, which is, that if at any time according to my office and place I am set in (as being attendant in his chamber) I come vnto him, either to doe him seruice, or to craue something of him, or else to speake to him; I endeuour to shew and present my selfe, with as great purity and humilitie of heart, as I can: for by how much cleaner in heart, I present my selfe to him, by so much more clearenesse I see and beholde him.

And

And I accustome to craue the fellowshippe of my Brother the Feare of God, that hee with an Aunte of mine, called Reuerence, would go also with me. De. What is the reason you take Reuerence with you? Loue, &c I weigh and consider with my selfe who I am, and who my Lord and Master is. I think vpon his most sacred Maiestie, who of right, and desert, ought to be reuerenced, and feared as one most worthy of all honour, and loue. Farther, I vse to contemplate how all the blessed soules fall prostrate before him, adore him, and praise him, and that by admiring, and praising his so great and excellent goodnes and Maiestie, they bee rauished, and in a sort transformed into God himself. Yet farther, I am wont to consider, how my hart, thought, wil, & purpose, or intent is laide open before him, and how he seeth, and knoweth my secrets, better then my selfe. Also how according to the pleasure of his diuine holy will, he is able to doe, alter, establish, and abolish all things: and how life and death, being and not being, the saluation, or damnation of the whole world, is in his hands. I farther meditate with my selfe, how bee is wholy and all good: & the chiefest, highest, and purest goodnes it selfe, which contẽplating rightly, I oft trẽble in heart, feare, & almost faint: especially beholding my selfe, so wicked, so vile, so abhominable

and so filthy a sinner, to presume, to speake to a Lord of so great Maiestie, and that he wil admit me to come to him, speake with him, and eat with him, as though I were vnited in great friendshippe with him. Often doe I vse this or like speech to him. What neede hast thou, O my Lord and Master that such sinners as my selfe, should present themselues before thee? Is it seemely, O my Lord, that such vnworthy persons should presume to serue or attend on thee: where is the honour and reuerence, that is due to thy princely Maiestie? De. What answere do you receiue againe from him. Loue. &c. I cannot certainly tel thee, saying that he makes me weepe for ioy, and sayeth. Care not thou much for that, let not this thing trouble thee, considering thou hast not of thy selfe procured this place, nor intruded into it, but art called to it, and chosen by mee. My selfe best knoweth why I haue placed thee in it. Let thy onely care be diligently to discharge thy office, and with thy vttermost power to performe, what thy duty bindeth thee to, in the place thou art apointed, and then take thou care for no other matter. De. What say you to him, when you come before him, accompanied with your associats Humility, Feare, & Reuerence? Loue, &c. First I dispatch those prayers and diuine seruice which this order of life, my calling,

calling and profession bind me to, and that not sadly or vnwillingly, or only for necessity, but with as great attention, deuotion, diligence, willingnes, chearefulnes, and reuerence as I can. And although I bee bound of necessity to such prayers, yet change I my necessity into a ready will, and most ioyfully performe what I am bound to doe. Then that I may craue something of him, and may moue him to grant it me; I endeauor with all my power to praise and laud him, and cease not to honour him, assuring my self that, that is acceptable to him: And in praysing him, I describe his miraculous works which he hath done, pleasing and delighting my selfe in remembring them, and exercise my selfe in telling his mighty power, high wisedome and exceeding goodnes. And farther, I rehearse the great grace and large bounties, which he bestoweth on his souldiers, and seruants, honouring and exalting him for the same: neither passe I in silence his exceeding great mercy, which he euer hath and still doth shew towards his enemies, and am much amased at his gentlenesse and clemency. That not only he doth not reuenge himself on them: but besides bestoweth great rewardes vpon them: besides, I render great thankes to him for the great goodnes which is in himselfe, and recite and number his vertues, and renown his

beauty, wisedome and exceeding goodnes, praising him for them, and reioycing, and triumphing that he is so exceeding great and good: And this doe I often, knowing sufficiently his will herein, and not doubting, but that it is acceptable to him, and that it is his pleasure that man should bee conuersant with himselfe, that is with God, and confer with him of pleasant, toyfull, and secret misteries, whereof they are ignorant, that be careleſſe thereof, and will not enter into his secret chamber with him, although they bee in his house, and attend vpon him. De. Wherefore doe you praise him with all these high titles? Loue &c. Because the more I extoll, commend and praise him, the more I displease, despise, and set at nought my selfe, which how acceptable it is to him, cannot be declared with tongue. And this is his will and pleasure, that we continually haue set before our eyes, his goodnes, his excellency, and his infinite greatnes, & our own malice, our baseness, and exceeding misery. And farther I am certaine, that I cannot be deceiued, although I praise and honour him all that is in my power: for hee is farre more noble, more excellent, more potent and greater, then eyther I or all creatures together, both Angelicall and humane can comprehend with thought.

Chap. VII.

Of the office of the Loue of God, in an other degree, & a continuation of that which he begã to declare, of the maner of praying.

LOVE &c. After that I haue endeauoured to prayse and exalt him with the vttermost of my power, I offer vp to him my whole mind and will, with a chiefe Purpose that I haue, that for no worldly thing I would offend or displease him, and also most earnestly I entreate him, that it may please him to kéepe and preserue mee in this will and mind, considering that without him, I am no way able to doe it. Then aske I forgiuenesse of him, for all the offences and iniuries I haue done vnto him, & beseech him that he will permit mee to thinke vpon, vnderstand, or loue nothing but himselfe. And yet farther I desire of him, that considering hee hath vouchsafed to admit mee for his seruant and friend, and that into a place of so high a function, that it will please him to bestow on me the holy spirit of Humility, which may withdraw and turne away my mind, from all things displeasing, and hatefull to him, that my seruice bee not hatefull but acceptable to him. Also I craue of him that he will bestow on me such things as he knoweth I stand in néede of, whither they bee such things as are necessarie for me, or such as for his honour and pleasure,

he will haue me endued with, and that for no other cause, but that he would suffer me to liue and die in him, and not cast me from his sight according to my desert. After this I pray for all those that I loue most, and to whom either spiritually or corporally I hold my selfe bound: for all this society, and for all liuing creatures, that it will please him to bestow his grace and mercy on them; that according to their duties they may know him, loue him, honour prayse and worshippe him. All this doe I labour to present to him with sincerity and purity of heart. De. How doest thou present thy selfe before him with this purity of heart: Loue &c. As neare as I can, I keepe a watch ouer my heart and minde, and take a care to my soule, restrayning as much as I may all my senses, and continually setting before my selfe plain simplicity, which doth interpret to the best whatsoeuer I behold. And if I would bee free and secure from all feare, then doe I remaine and abide with my Lorde and Master, with whome to bee present, and to talke and conferre, and whose counsell and aduise to demaund, is my chiefe good and ioy, my onely will and comfort: neyther can I enioy peace, quiet or security, or finde any maner of contentment, or ease, but only when I am present in his Company. And for this cause

haue

haue I determined with my selfe, to forsake all worldly pleasures, and to dwell with him, and cleaue to him, neuer to depart from him, except hee shall commaund me. De. Yet I thinke it very necessary sometimes to be busied in reading good bookes. Loue &c. True it is, it is good to spend sometime in reading, but not with a minde onely to become learned, and skilfull, but that thereby thou mayest finde out God and his wayes, and once hauing found him, mayest know and loue him. For this I shall not neede many bookes. This one thing I loke after, will, and desire, that I may settle and fire my whole loue on God, and may ioyne all my affection, reason and vnderstanding to him. For his loue alone is sufficient for mee, hee will teach mee all things that shall be conuenient for me to know, and can open and discouer more secrets and misteries to mee, how I shall loue and not offend him, then all the bookes that the whole world doth possesse. And I obtaine greater purity of soule, feare, deuotion, reuerence, compunction, fortitude and strength, and seuerity against the flesh, by being in his presence, then by reading continually. Besides I know for certaine, hee neuer will aske account how much I haue read: but how much I haue loued and esteemed him. Neither would I altogether

together exclude or banish reading, especially for such as are yet simple and ignorant, and know not how to iudge of their thoughtes, words and workes: for to such it is requisite to spend much time in reading, and to learne the exercises of the spirit & mind: for as it would be thought great folly, rashnes, and disgrace to a Prince, if a rude country fellow, not accustomed to speake to a King, should presume in the presence of all his Nobility to come, and boldly speake his mind, and if in speaking hee should vse his accustomed, rusticall and vndecent terms, it could not but be thought so great a disgrace to the Prince, that hee iustly might commaund him to be thrust out from his presence, and farre better had it beene, hee had neuer presumed thither: euen so standeth the case in spirituall cases. But to those that by reading & hearing, haue already attained to the knowledge of God and diuine exercises, to such the exercise of praying is more necessary then reading, as being already expert how to behaue themselues in the spirituall Court. Farther when I present my selfe before my Lord and Master, I am very carefull, that inconstantly I turne not my head or eyes hither or thither. For it would be taken a great dishonor to him, to loke an other way, whilest one should talke with him. De. Tell me your meaning more plaine-

plainely, for as yet I vnderstand not. Loue. When I speake to my Master, if at such time I busie my thoughts, and reason vpon any thing but onely vpon him I speake to: then turne I my backe, not my face to him. For this cause when I perswade my selfe that I am present before him in sight, and that hee doth behold mee, and neuer turneth his eyes from me, but marketh what I say: I vse all reuerence, deuotion, loue, and attention to him that I can. Then doe I prayse and thanke him for all his benefites bestowed on me, and all other his Creatures, calling them often to my mind, and rehearsing them, being most certaine that hee would not haue mee ingrate and vnmindfull of his gifts.

Chap. VIII.
Of the third degree of Loue.

LOVE &c. Now although I haue shewed the first degree or steppe, of my loue, which is to loue my Lord and Master, and neuer to offend him, and also the second, which is to performe and put in practise all his commaundements, yet doe I not content my selfe herewith, in regard my loue is so great to him, but that I adde yet a third degree, or steppe to his loue, which is to doe all those thinges that

that I know are pleasing to him, or whatsoeuer I can imagine hee would I should doe. Dc. How know you, that you do those things that please him? Loue &c. There bee two thinges whereby I may know that easily, which are, if I loue that which he loueth, and likewise hate, what is hatefull to him. Concerning the first which is, to loue what he loueth: I loue his Sonne, the most beautifull, sweet and noble, of all that euer were, & most like his Father, and so obedient to him as neuer was, or shall be Sonne more obedient to a Father. Whome the Father loueth euen as himselfe, because hee is more like to him, then euer Sonne was to a Father. And so great is the loue and vnion which is betweene them, that they two be but one, of one will, like power, and the selfe same knowledge. Who although they bee distinct in persons, yet are they both one in Essence. For this Sonne, the Father hath made a Garment with the handes of his goodnesse, like to that which Shepheardes doe weare, which the Sonne hauing put on, departed out of the priuy chamber of his princely Father, and yet for euer remayneth with him. And thus he liueth here in this Pallace, and conuerseth with vs. For otherwise we could not behold him. Moreouer when his Father would send him ouer all the

world, cladde with this garment, and a little trauailing Scrippe, he entred also into this desert, to seeke out his sheepe that were wandered and strayed. And as he trauailed through this Desert, the Father permitted that hee should be killed of Wolues, and deuoured of dogs, and would giue him no helpe although he could, but would haue him endure a most cruell death by these Wolues, more painefull to him then euer any suffered, being his flesh most tender, in that he was the son of a king. All this did our Lord of his exceeding loue towards vs, that all we that dwell and abide in his house might know, and trie his charity, and thereby might loue him againe, considering that first he loued vs so greatly, that hee spared not his owne only son, but deliuered him to die for the loue he bare to vs all. Whilst the Loue of God was relating this discourse, Desire being wholy wounded to the heart could not refrain from vehement weeping: but the Loue of God going on with this discourse, saide farther: and although God the Father hath suffered his son to be killed, yet notwithstanding he loueth him so exceedingly, that by his great omnipotency, he soon raised him from death, much more beautifull, & gloriously triumphing, bringing with him the sheep which he came to seek; others being left in this wildernesse, that they

might

might bee fed and become fat with the knowledge of him, he hauing a perpetuall & watchfull care ouer them. So at length returning againe to his Princely father, hee sitteth now on his right hand, speaking and making intercession for vs all, being ouercom with too great a loue towards vs. For I am of this opinion, that except wee were spared for his sake, long since wee had beene driuen cleane out of this Pallace: so wicked and miserable wée are, and so negligently, and loathfully wée serue him, wholy forget him and contemne him, and so little care and remembrance we haue of him: but the omnipotent father loueth this son so greatly, that in my opinion nothing can bee more acceptable to him in this world, then that we should loue this his Sonne with him: for which cause I endeauour & labour to loue him, & to do those thinges which I thinke pleasing to him. De. What is it that you can doe acceptable to him? Loue &c. In remembring and speaking of his most holy life, his pains and labours, his most bitter death and passion, and his holy commandements and as neare as I can conforming my selfe according to his manners: for who soeuer my Lord & Master seeth most carefully to imitate the life of his son, him doth he most loue, and hold deare to him. And for this cause was it his holy will and pleasure

that

that he should come & liue here among vs, that by that meanes hee might teach vs how wee should liue, who before liued no better thē brute beasts. Therefore hath our Lord set him before our eyes as a mirror or looking glasse, that euery one may know whether he doe, or omit what his pleasure is, and may see and beholde in the life of his sonne, as in a glasse, whether his workes be good or bad. Neither is there any thing in all the world, by which we may more truly come to the knowledge thereof. And yet besides this, there is one thing more, which my Lord and M loueth that is my Boy, called the Loue of our neighbor, whome he esteemeth so much, and holdeth so deare, that whatsoeuer wee doe to him, be it good or bad, he taketh as if it were done to himselfe. De. How do you loue this Boy? Lou. &c. Euen as my selfe. And first I perswade my selfe that he is better then I am, and although I execute a higher place, yet in all thinges that are agreeable to vertue I obey him, I farther am carefull that by no meanes I afflict him, or giue him occasion of sorrow, but shewall loue and kindnesse to him that I can. I neuer haue sinister conceit of him, but rather excuse him all that I may: I neuer call him by any name of disgrace, I most willingly dissemble, and hide his naturall defects, and imperfections,

in

in distresse and aduersity, I lament and bewaile him: in his absence I detract him not, neither suffer others to do, if I may hinder it. I wish and desire that my Lord and Master bee better beloued of him then of my selfe: and that it would please God to make him as good or better then I my selfe am. I enuie him nothing eyther for corporall or spirituall giftes bestowed on him by God, or for any thing which hee enioyeth in this world, but reioyce in his prosperity, and lament in his aduersity. Farther, I thinke him to be the Angell of God, and my selfe to be vnworthy to bee his seruant. This doe I, for that I know him to bee beloued of my Master. Also I loue those thinges which appertaine to our societie, towards which I carry a very great zeale, in regarde that they appertaine to the worshippe and honour of my Lord and Master, and to the preseruation and maintenance of this his house. Wherefore I am very carefull that nothing be lost, or mislayed, especially of those things which belong to the seruice of Religion, Ceremonies, & the holy Canons of the Church. Which things although many doe not greatly esteeme, yet I am fully perswaded that the holy Ghost would neuer haue instituted them, except hee had knowne them to be pleasing to God. Therefore I hold the smallest Ceremonies to be obserued

serued, imagining they tend to the honour of God, and most ready and willingly, with all humility and reuerence doe I keepe them And this thought doe I still carry in my mind, if I should not honour my Lord and Master, worship him carefully, serue him dutifully, & shew my selfe most zealous in his seruice, who should doe it? considering I am beholding to him, more then all other creatures. For if the seruants and attendants of great Princes and States serue and obey their Masters, so carefully and diligently, and with so great a desire; why should not I serue and honor my Master and Lord, that admitteth me to the familiarity of his chamber. Therefore if the whole world should fall and decline from his obedience, and not one should persuer to shew him reuerence: yet would I remaine faithfull, euen vntill my last moment of life.

Chap. IX.

Of those things which the Loue of God hateth, and a conclusion of his duty & office.

The other thing of the two, which I spake of before, wherewith I please and content my Lord & Master, is, to hate such things as I know he hateth. And two especiall enemies I know my master hath, which are The world, and my flesh. Wherefore I haue resolued with my selfe, to hate them all, that I can,

and to haue neither frendshyp or peace with thē which determinatiō to performe, I purpose an other thing, which is to take no delight or recreation with thē, neuer to talk or conuerse familiarly with thē, except it be by the cōmandement of my M. which cōmandement is of more weight, thē any Purpose I can vndertake: therfore haue I besought the Gouernor of this Palace, that he neuer send me abroad, into towne or coūtry for my recreatiō, or disport, which is a thing different frō my disposition, & which I hate: yet whē he cōmandeth it, I must nedes obey him. And although for some causes my M. command me somtimes to goe abroad into the world, yet will he that I returne with all the spēd that I can make, for fear lest I be caught and deceiued with the deceits thereof: being assured, that how warely soeuer men conuerse therein, yet more hurt then good commeth euer thereby. Likewise do I detest & hate my owne faultes and vnclean es, my ill motiens & desires my sodaine passions & prones to sin, not ignorant how hatefull they be to my Lord & M. And therfore for the loue of him, I continually labor to amend my selfe. Besids I sequester my selfe from all that dwell in this Pallace (for his loue) except when charity & necessitie requir e the cōtrary. Neither do I it for that cause that I contemne them, or thinke them vnwor-

thy

thy of my company & fellowship (for as I said before, I esteeme them as Saints and Angels) but rather because I thinke my selfe vnworthy of their presence and conuersation, or meete to kisse the ground they tread on. De. Why doe you so? Lo. Because in these times Religion is much decayed, by reason of too much familiarity, and conuersing of such as professe religious liues, not onely amongst themselues, but also amongst prophane persons. Whereby it chanceth that so little prayer, deuotion & meditation is vsed. For in these dates some religious persons, are become like worldlings, and onely in name and habit they shew themselues religious when they treate of and handle naught, but worldly causes: & holines & religion is so rare amongst some of them, that they neuer frequent their deuotions, but when they meet in their Churches, out of which they talke of nothing, but worldly businesses & newes, being alwaies so distracted, that they know not how to collect their minds to serue God: & when they are called against their wils, to their Churches to say prayers they feare they shall not soone enough depart from thence again: & thus they say prayers being ful of high misteries, with little reuerence or no deuotiō at al, hauing their minds & desire on ẏ end, & in ẏ kitchen. And because they vnderstand little of God, or what appertaineth

to him: God likewise regardeth them not, but hateth them. Therefore haue I determined to inure my selfe to a custome, and to endeuour to be alwaies solitary, and attend my deuotions that so my mind may take delight in God, & those things that appertain to him, & that I may learn to loue him as in truth it is most requisite, cõsidering that for that cause I haue forsaken the world, & withdrawn my selfe hither. De. Some will say thou art singular, & will note thee for it. Loue. I regard not that, for I ought not desire to please men: especially when it shall displease & offend God. And so long as I am not scandalous to others, let them thinke or speake their pleasures of me. That which I doe, is but my office, & duty, if therefore thou see me me, do thou as I haue done. CHAP. X.

The Loue of God brought Desire into the house.

IN this meane time Desire was much amazed and bethought himselfe of those things which he had heard of the Loue of God, and said to him. De. When you haue done all these things, is there cause that you should bee in feare of any thing? Loue, &c. Yea truelie. I must with great care and studie endeuour, that by doeing well I fall not into vaine glorie, and selfe liking. For if so I should preiudge to them: presently my Master would expell me this

this Pallace. Therefore haue I alwayes Humility my mother by my side. De. Carry me I beseech you into the house. Loue. Follow me, for thou hast had conference enough with me. I will bring thee vnto an other fellow of mine, whose office is higher, and more worthy then mine. De. What is his name? Lou. He is called Desire of God. Now Desire went with a chearefull mind, accompanied with the Loue of God, to seeke Desire of God, and hauing found him, he asked of him if he were Desire of God. Desire of God. I am he thou seekest, what wouldest thou with mee? De. I would entreat to bee admitted to your seruice. Here Desire of God was delighted with the ready will of Desire, and saide to him. Desire of God. If thou desire to liue with mee, then must be wel instructed by my brother the Loue of God: for Desire of God is made of the wine that runneth out of that vessel of the Loue of God: see therefore thou be first well instructed by the Loue of God, least otherwise thou deceiue thy selfe. De. I haue conuersed sometime with the Loue of God, who hath instructed me of all things that are necessary for mee to doe, which I hope through Gods helpe, to be able to execute: but I cannot assure you, making no doubt, whither I am endued with the Loue of God or no, considering it is a thing

knowne onely to himselfe, who loue, or do not loue him, Therefore herein I humble my selfe to his wisedome. Neither can I assure you, I haue any thing of my selfe, one thing excepted, which is Good will my dog, whome neyther, I dare presume to challenge as my owne, considering I haue him by the gifte of an other: these words of Desire, pleased Desire of God, the rather considering he perceiued that Desire durst not attribute to himselfe his loue of God. De. Now sir, let me craue to know your conditions and office. De &c. Euen as a man through true knowledge of himselfe, attaineth to great contempt & hatred of himselfe, and as through true knowledge of God a man likewise cõmeth to perfect loue of God: so by much louing of God, a man is brought to the greater desire of God: & whosoeuer he be that getteth me, he desireth nothing else that this world can yeeld: for with such vertue and worthines do I adorn his mind, that he thinketh himselfe vnmeet, to desire any thing, besides that most excellent, most rare, and most to be desired good, which is onely our L. Iesus Christ: I say, I make him the most excellent of the world: For although he be born but of mean parentage, yet do I make him a mighty king: for whosoeuer is truly endued with me, hee thinketh on nothing but only on God, he speaketh nothing but only

of

of God, because that where soeuer his treasure is, there he setteth his heart: & whatsoeuer the heart profoundly thinketh, that especially the mouth vttereth: & those thinges which are deliuered by the consent of the mouth, apparantly declare the thought of the heart. I am the food & repast of that mind which liueth, & is nourished by good desire in this house of Charity, I am of highest dignity, & keepe the doore of the secret chamber of the foresaid Charity & haue authority to admit such friends as I allow of: herevse I the office of a cryer or trumpetter, & walking about this Pallace, make certain cries & sounds, vntill such time as I awake and stir vp my master, & cause him to come forth to speake with such as seek him: who dost thou think awaked me euen now, when thou stoodst calling so long at the gate, & knockedst with the hāmers of teares & sighes: truly the barking of thy dog. I am the truest messenger of Charity, & come first to the gate, speak first to my M. am nearest to him, & am soonest heard of him: farther, it is in me to distribute the fruit of a most rare tree, which we haue called the Sight of God, & I do giue it to others to eat. De. Is this fruit pleasant in taste: for in ỹ house of Humility another fruit was giuen me, most bitter to eate, especialy at the first it could hardly be swallowed. Delire &c. This fruit is most sweet yet farre

sweeter in the taste of some men, then of others, according as men are more desirous and hungry after it & as they haue their taste & mouthes most perfect: some there bee whose teeth are but dull or blunt, with whom this fruit agreeth not, because they cannot holde it. Other some eat it without hunger or appetite: hauing their stomacks full & ouercharged with other meats; to these men likewise it tasteth not pleasantly, neither is it lightly digested of them, yet neuertheless it doth not hurt them. Some others there be, which by reason of some ague or some immoderate heate haue not their taste so good as others, and these cannot iudge the goodnes of this fruit, but only according as they shall heare by others. De. I beseech you giue mee leaue to taste a little of this fruit. Desire of God. It pleaseth me that thou sayest to taste a little thereof: for in this mortall life no man may eate thereof his fill: only hee may taste and trie how sweete it is. De. Why so? Desire of God If any man might enioy it here to the full of his desire, hee would neuer desire to depart from this world, and to goe to heauen: know therefore that liuing here in this vale of misery, almost dead through hunger, and depriued of strength, by reason of long penurie: we ought longly to watch and desire that day, wherein we may enter into that great Supper

of

of our King and Master, desiring and thirsting after him in no other manner, then dooth the Hart thirst for the cleare fountain in the hotest summer: and such is the vertue and force of this fruit, that one little morsell bee it neuer so smal, doth satiate a mans stomacke, be he neuer so great an eater. But being once come to the presence of this King and Master, hee will make our stomacke better and stronger, that wee shall be able to eate of this fruit, so much as we will, and neuer receiue hurt or prejudice by it: But here if any one eate more of it, then his stomacke can beare: he shall rather receiue hurt then good thereby. Therefore must wee moderately eate of this fruit vntill we arriue at that place of happines, where for euer we shall be filled without all measure, with that same fruit which here we doe but onely taste.

Chap. XI.

How Desire of God prepared Desire to eate of this fruit.

DE. Now then Sir, I beseech you bestow vpon me to eate so much of this fruit as your selfe shall thinke good. Desire of God. First then considering this fruite is not contained, but in a most cleane vessell: it behooueth that thou cleanse and make cleane thy teeth, and that thou wash thy mouth, thy eyes, thy face, thy handes and feete. De. Where

may

may I find water wherwith to doe it? Desire of God I will bring thee to a liuing fountain, that continually runneth both night and day, called Holy Religion, also I will assemble the Virgins of this Pallace, who shall assist to wash and purifie thee. This much contented Desire, and gladly did he expect the comming of these Virgins, when behold he saw Desire of God come and bring them with him, saying these be the Virgins that shall wash thee. The first is called Sweetnes. The second Concord. The third Pitty or Compassion. The fourth Grace. The fift Clemency. The sixt Indulgence. The seuenth Mercy. The eight Benevolence. The ninth Gentlenes. The tenth, Sufferance. The eleuenth Tranquility. The twelfth Security. The thirteenth Ioy. The fourteenth Discretion or Moderation. The fifteenth Deuotion: who wil giue thee a certain sauce that shall procure thee an appetite, whereby more willingly & pleasingly thou shalt eate this fruit. for it is onely giuen to such as hunger after it, but others are sent away empty without it. The sixteenth Virgin is Religion. The seuenteenth is Perseuerance. The eighteenth is Prayer. The nineteenth is Honesty, & my selfe Desire of God am the last, who am euer present at this holy Pallace of Virgins: And if thou wilt likewise associate thy self with them

them, it will prepare thee not a little to eate this fruit, which so soone as thou hast eaten, thou shalt euer after haue these Virgins thy companions, who will neuer forsake thee, except thou first abandon them; for they be very greedy to eate of this meate, and so soon as they espie this fruit, they flie to it as bees will flie to honey, and we cannot better know when a man hath this fruit, then if wee see these Virgins flocking about his gates. Now Desire being washed and well recreated with eating this fruite, was wonderfully comforted, to whome Desire of God saide, considering brother that thou hast eaten of this fruit, it is now expedient that thou doe sing also. For the seruants of God after they haue eate their meate, vse to sing, giuing thanks and prayse to God, and none at all abideth in this house, that is not expert in singing. De. After what manner shall I sing? Desire of God. Wee will goe to the quier where all the Singers abide. The first is called Benediction or Blessing. The second Honour. The third Praysing. The fourth Thanksgiuing, among these must thou sing, who are excellent in voyces, & haue singular sweet voices. De. What part must I sing? Desire of God. The first as I haue said is called Benediction, he singeth the treble and prayseth God for his high omnipotencie.

The

The second Honour, he singeth the Counterteno; & prayseth God for his infinite wisedom. The third Praysing, hee singeth the Teno, & extolleth the wonderfull goodnes of God, and all his vertues, his noblenes, and excellency, & all that is in him. The fourth Thanksgiuing, he singeth the Base & giueth thanks to God for all his creatures, & for all the benefits which he hath bestowed on them.

Chap. XII.

How Desire learned to sing.

Desire was now much delighted, both with the maner of singing & also with the song, to whome Desire of God saide, now bethinke thy selfe whither thou wilt returne from hence or no. De. Whither can I goe, that I may better my selfe, especially, considering I am come hither with so great labour & difficulty; For finding my selfe to be well entertained here, and to liue in peace, and all contentment, by no means will I depart from hence, for the olde Prouerbe sayth, he that is well, let him not change his place; therefore Sir, I cannot be perswaded to depart, except you will by violence expell me. Desire of God. It is not our custome to expell any against their wils, rather doe we entreat such as enter in hither, that they will make their abodes here among vs: Yet that they may know, that we admit

none

admit none for our necessity: sometimes, we aske of them whither they will depart. But seeing thou hast determined to continue here, thou must not liue and be idle here: for no idle body dwelleth here, or that doth not spend his time in good exercises. De. What must I do? Desire of God. Whatsoeuer is commaunded to thee. De. If I am commaunded nothing, shall I bee idle? Desire of God. Thou shalt sing, and giue thankes, and prayse to God, for thou art admitted hither especially to sing. And whilest thou art in doing that which thou art commaunded, thou mayest sing to thy selfe lest thou be troubled with idle thoughtes: but if thou desire to profit much, and greatly to please our Lord and Master, and to insinuate thyselfe into his friendshippe, as much as thou canst (if nothing else be commaunded to thee) conuerse and conferre with him alone. Then shalt thou heare what hee will speake in thee, & thou shalt learne many secrets that hee will reueale to thee, and thou shalt become his most inward friend. De. May any enter into his Chamber and speake with him? Desire of God. Yea truely, so that he be accompanied with Humility. And farther I assure thee, he taketh especiall delight, when any will come to him, and seeke to awake him: for it is his nature not to desire to be alone, & a man ne-

uer

ner so meane or base, yet doth hee delight to haue him desire his presence. And so great is his dignity & worthines, that he regardeth not his person, or maketh any differēce of their birthes that sue to him, regarding onely the humility of their minds. One man is as deare to him as an other, and he created them all of one and the same matter. Yea more, the more base and vile the person is, so that he debase and detect himselfe; the greater doth hee declare his loue towards them. And to say truth those which dwell in this Pallace amongst vs, the greatest part of them (some few excepted) are borne but of meane and base parentage, for such as the world contemneth as abiects, those doth God choose for his faithfullest seruantes, that none of this society should flatter themselues, that they deserued of themselues to bee admitted hither, and not through the speciall grace and goodnes of God. If therefore thou desire to continue amongst vs, and to Sing among our other Singers, and desire farther that thy singing may be pleasing and acceptable to God, thou must labour to obserue these foure things. The 1 is a Good will. The 2 Humility. The 3 Patience. The 4 Charity, which if thou doest, thou shalt neuer erre in singing: And although sometimes thou chance to neglect some part, yet by diligent obseruation, thou

shalt

shalt easily come into measure againe. With the first measure or tune, which is A good will, thou shalt sing the plaine song, which is as it were the ground and foundation of the others. With the second and third I meane Humility and Patience, thou shalt sing the Cōtrterno, for Humility and Patience are contrary to selfe will. With the fourth which is Charity thou shalt explaine, and declare the sound and tune of the Organs, and that with exceeding sweetnes and harmony of thy soule and spirite. And if it fortune that thou bee out of tune, presently haue recourse to the first note or measure. Also if thou chance to sing contrary to thy fellowes, obserue him that directeth thee, who will bring thee soone into tune againe, through his helpe and assistance, and with the loue of our Lord and Master. And in all thy singing obserue this one thing diligently, that thou forget not to eate the fruit, which thou didst gather in the house of Humility, I mean Distrust of my selfe, for the more thou attainest to the loue and desire of God, the better thou shalt know him, & greater shalt thou finde him. To conclude the more thou shalt offer of this fruite to my Lord and Master, the greater shalt thou find his loue and friendship towardes thee, for willingly doth he eate of it, and most pleasing is it to him.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

How Desire of God brought Desire into the chamber of his Lord and Master, and of the manner of Praying.

DE. One thing there remaineth yet which I would entreat of you, that now considering, you haue granted me to bee a seruant of this house, you will farther bring mee to the knowledge of my Master, that I may see him, kisse his hand. Desire of God. Follow me in, and I will grant thy desire. Now began Desire to feare and to tremble, thinking that he must speake with a king of so great Maiestie in his priuy chamber, & so great was his feare and his astonishment, that neither could hee or durst he presume to come neare him, but now beganne to thinke to goe backe againe: but aduising better with himselfe, and thinking that hee was a sweet, a noble, and an affable king, and courteous and gentle to all men, hee tooke heart again, trusting wholy to the gentleness of him. Here Desire of God bid him stay at the doze, vntill he went in to his Master, and tolde him how Desire desired to speake with him: And now againe began Desire to bee doubtfull, how and in what manner he should speake to his Lord & Master. When Desire of God comming to him told him, hee had acquainted his Master with his being there, and therefore bad

bad him goe in, and he would stay for him there. Now Desire began with exceeding great reuerence to enter the house, and goe into the Hall, who so soone as he espied his Lord and Master, he fell prostrate on the ground, and beganne to weepe, not presuming to lift vp either his head or eies. For he had not forgot, what an enemy he had been sometime to his Master, with how many wrongs and iniuries he had offended him how ill and vnreuerently he had sometimes spoken of him, with the remembrance hereof, hee was not able to speake, but stoode weeping and sighing, seeing himselfe present before the Maiesty of him, hee had so highly offended. Our L. What meaneth this weeping? What dost thou here? speakest thou nothing? else and say what thou wouldst haue. De. What? may I presume to speake O Lord in presence of thy Maiesty, I acknowledge my selfe vnworthy to open my vncleane mouth in the presence of such a Lord, admit me to be silent, and to stand still and sigh, and to bewaile and lament mine owne iniquity. Our L. Wherefore then art thou come hither? De. I of my selfe neuer came in hither, for I holde my selfe vnworthy to abide in thy house, much lesse worthy to enter thy chamber. Our L. Who then brought thee hither? Desire. Thy selfe sweete Lord, thou hast drawen me, thou hast made me erre,

and call vppon thee, thou hast commanded thy gates to bee opened, and that I should bee brought in hither to thee. My selfe am wholly ignorant of the cause hereof, or what hath mooued thee to it, or what neede thou hast of mee. For I hold it more sufficient, then that so vnworthy a wretch as I am, should bee thought worthy to be the meanest of thy seruants, and a bondman and slaue in this thy house, although of my selfe I cannot deserue that: and hold my selfe vnworthy to obtaine it. But considering that it hath pleased thee to call me, and that it pleaseth thee, I shal abide with thee, and speake to thee: open thou O Lord I beseech thee my lippes, and teach me what I shal say in thy presence. Plant in me thy spirit of feare and reuerence that thy Maiesty be not offended by mee or vnreuerently worshipped, or vnhonorably entreated from this time forward of so vile a sinner as I acknowledge my selfe. For it cānot be done without offring thee great iniury. And rather had I kill my selfe then to offer contempt, ignominie or disgrace to thy Maiestie. For thereby should I offer great iniurie and contempt to all Angels, and Archangels, and the whole fellowshippe of heauen, who with so great reuerence, and feruour doe loue and honor thee. Teach me therefore O Lorde, what I shall say or do to thee. For I wholly

resigne

resigne my self into thy hands. Grant me therefore sweet Lord the spirit of Humility wherewith I may serue thee, thy house & all thy seruãts, let my seruice be acceptable to thee, & be thou O Lord honored and glorified in me.

CHAP. XIIII.

How our Lord instructed Desire, how he should behaue himselfe.

OVR LO. Rise vp, and lay away al manner of feare. Ifhencefoorth thou wilt bee vertuous and godly, and behaue thy selfe according to thy dutie: I will neuer remember the wrongs & iniuries thou hast done me. And that thou maist hencefoorth amend & become better, I will deliuer thee onely foure words, which if thou remember, and wilt only obserue, shall be very beneficiall and auaileable to thee. The first two are, I and Thou. The other two. A Seruant and a King. These foure words when thou canst well exercise and practize, will bring thee to great perfection & purity of heart: and will defend and deliuer thee from all perturbations of the mind, & will instruct thee to liue peaceably and friendly, and conuerse quietly with all mẽ De. Vouchsafe O Lord to direct me, how I may exercise these foure words. Our. L. Thou maist refer all thy exercises to these foure words, for they are of great importance, & whole volumes, might be written of the alone, which of

selues were sufficient to teach great perfection. Therefore when thou resoluest to speake vnto me, if then thou finde thy selfe cold, distracted or discontented for any thing that thou art commãded, think to thy selfe that with these words alone I speake to thee. I and thou. And then exclude from thy mind the whole world, and whatsoeuer thou hast heard or seene in thy life, imagining that none, but I and Thou are left in this world. The other two words, Seruant and King, will enable thee in liuing with thy brothers in this house. The first, wherof Seruant will profit thee herein, that thou maiest imagine thy self, the seruant of all men, whereby thou shalt attaine, Humility & Obedience. The other word King, will serue thee to remember that thou art King & commander ouer thy selfe. For such Kings doe Kingdoms & loade with all treasures. For this time be content with this direction, and haue peace & quietnes, & so depart. De. Wherfore O Lord dost thou bid me depart & wilt y I forsake thy presence? Our L. Thinke not thy selfe worthy to abide alwaies with me, but at such times onely as I will, and shall send for thee, and then take thou heede that thou doe not offend in vaineglory or presumption. For according to my owne will and pleasure I will cal thee. But before thou goe hence, leaue thy heart here with me, that wheresoeuer thou con-

uerse

uerse, thy better part maybe with me. De. Most willingly sweet Lord, I commit my heart to thy protection. Our L. I receiue it from thy willing offer, and yet think not alwaies I will do so, for somtimes for thy benefit, & to humble thee I wil refuse to keep it. And this one thing I would not haue thee ignorant of, which peraduenture is vnknown to thee. That the greater comfort and consolation I desire to send my friends: with the more troubles, aduersities, & afflictions, I vse to visit them. But if thou wilt leaue Good wil thy dog here with me, he may continually remaine in my presence, & shall neuer go from me, except thou thyselfe wilt, yet neuertheless dayly must thou commend him to me. De. Why is it needefull that I commend him to thee dayly? sufficeth it not that I doe it once. Our L. No, & not for feare, least I should forget thee; but least thou thy selfe proue vnmindful of me, and that thou maist haue occasion euer to remember and haue mee in thy minde, whereby I may gratifie and reward thee dayly, and according to thy necessity and want may helpe and succour thee. For nothing it is to me, whether thou bee mindfull or vnmindfull of me. De. I yeeld thee most humble thankes most sweet Lord and maister. Long since haue I proued thy goodnesse and beneuolence, for which thou worke st all thinges in

vs onely for our saluation and benefit.

Chap. XV.

How Desire put in practise the 4. words of his Lord and Master, and what benefit he receaued thereby.

THus Desire departing out of the chamber of his Lord and Master, & leaving his heart still behind with him: he found Desire of God without the doore, expecting his comming, to whom he said. What hast thou done so long time within: thinkest thou my Lord & Master, taketh delight and is pleased with many words beleeue me, thou shalt sometime preuaile more with him, with one word, then with a hundred. Me thinks I haue stayed too short a time with him. De. Of God. Now view and consider all his house, considering thou art receaued in hither. De I will goe to my chamber. De. of God. Goe in the name of God. Now Desire did dayly reuolue in his minde the foure wordes, which his Lord and Master had deliuered him, & oft would say to himselfe. I & Thou, Seruant and King. And whensoeuer hee spake them, whither he diuided them, or ioyned them yet euer they agreed wel together. For ioyning the first, which is I. With the third, which is A Seruant, he said to himselfe I pronounce them rightly: For, for the loue of my Lord & master. I am a seruant. Then ioyning the first with

the

the laſt which is a king. Still he ſeemed to pronounce thē rightly. For being ỹ ſeruant of God, he ſaid he was a King. For to ſerue God: that is to raigne. Againe ſpeaking them an other way & ioyning, King with Seruant. Still they agreed well together. For the King of heauen to the intent hee might make mee a king, made himſelfe a ſeruant, and whoſoeuer will be a king it is neceſſary that firſt he make himſelfe a ſeruant. Thus did Deſire for his benefit manie waies ioyne theſe foure words togither. For if at any time he were oppreſſed with any externall aduerſity preſently would he ſay to himſelf I nothing regard what men ſay or think of me, not eſteeming whether they honor or contēne me. I am a ſeruāt or bondman, and theſe things are meet for ſuch an one. If he felt himſelfe to be tempted with any voluptuous pleaſure, then ſaid he to himſelfe. Be it far from mee, that am a King to become the ſlaue of filthy vice and pleaſure. So vile a ſeruitude befits not my Nobility. Thus receaued Deſire exceeding benefits by theſe words: whether hee ioyned them in order, or placed them contrarily. For both did they quench naughty deſires kindled in him and appeaſed and mittigated all his aduerſities. But now cōſidering ỹ explicatiō of theſe words may be infinit, leaſt I ſeem to be tedious, I reſer the reſt to the good conſideration of others.

FINIS.

An

AN APPENDIX, GATHERED out of the worke of *Ludouicus Blosius*, conteining briefly, the cheefe matter of the former Dialogue.

Thirteene short precepts, most necessary for all men, that desire to attaine to the perfect loue of God.

The first.

O^r the loue of thy Sauiour Iesus Christ, who suffered most bitter torments for thy redemption, renounce & forsake all sensuall delights and pleasures: whensoeuer thou wouldest, or desirest, to heare, see, smel, taste, touch, or speake any thing: call to thy remembrance, and thinke that thou art then to obey God, and reason speaking in thee, and not thy sensuall appetite, which shall moue and stir thee. Bee alwaies ready & content to want the delights of the spirit, according to the pleasure and ordinance of God. And whensoeuer thou art com-

forted

comforted with an inward sweetnes, and consolation; rest not therein, but beware thou abuse it not according to thy owne proper pleasure.

2. Keepe euer a carefull watch ouer thy seeing, hearing, and ouer thy speaking, that they decline not after vnlawfull, vaine, and vnprofitable things. Thou must be most vigilant, and warie in speaking, that thou vtter not more wordes, or in other manner, then shall beseeme thee. Let all thy talke be short, plaine, & voide of strife & contention. Gouerne, and order carefully, all parts of thy body. Auoide, and shunne immoderate laughter, and all leuitie, and wantonnesse in thy behauiour.

3 Loue not any creature with an inordinate affection, but mortifie thy selfe to all transitory things, and carry a mind free from such allurements: for in such a freedome is conteyned the most true, and pleasant life.

4. Kill and destroy with all possible care, through a full resignation and denial of thy selfe all thy passions, and sinfull affections, and especially thy stubborne and obstinate self-will. Loue onely, before all things, the holie will of God and stil wish that it may bee done, and to that, wholy submit thy selfe in such sort, that whatsoeuer God wil haue done, that same thou shalt desire also. In all things, and at all

times

all times, preferre the praise and honor of God, before thy owne profit, and private commodity.

5. In all things that shall happen, wisely expect the prouidence of God, and carefully commit thy selfe and al thine to him. Knowing that he hath care ouer thee. All aduersity and tribulation (be it internall or externall) take as sent from the hand of God. Beleeuing for certayne, that he doth send it thee, for thy farther benefit and good of thy soule. Beare it therefore patiently euen to the last houre, giuing thankes to God, and continually praysing him, through whose permission and ordinance such a thing is befalne thee. And bee not troubled or moued for any iniury, that shall bee offered to thee, nor impatiently complaine thereof to any man: but calling to remembrance thy owne iniquitie and ingratitude, holde thy selfe worthy of all men to be reprehended, blamed, contemned, vexed, scorned, and trodde on. Why shouldst thou be dejected for the wordes of men, or for any thing that thou canst suffer from them? Giue men leaue to thinke & speake their pleasures of thee, let the world, and the Diuell rage as they will at thee, considering it commeth but by Gods permission. Doe thou in the meane time, leane wholy to our Lord Jesus, and silently keepe peace continuallie in thy heart. If thou doest truely consider how

shame-

shamefull and sharpe things, thy Creator and Redeemer Jesus Christ hath suffered for thee, most patiently thou wouldest endure any affliction whatsoeuer.

6 Imagine thy selfe more base, & abiect, then any other creature remembring thy own vilenesse, and what thy sinnes haue deserued. If thou thinke any good of thy selfe considering thou hast none, if vnwiselie thou like thy owne doinges and conceaue well of them, herein thou shewest thy exceeding pride, for which, thou stinkest before the face of God. What good soeuer is in thee, it is Gods, and not thine, beware therefore in vsurping that, which appertayneth to God. Neither boast thereof, or seeke to please thy selfe: in that which shall so highly displease almightie God. Farther think thy selfe vnworthy of the smallest benefitteit shall please God to bestow on thee.

7 Obey and follow in all lawfull things the will and commandement of other men, thy owne selfe-will clearely abandoned, and all appetites and desires vanquished and ouercome. Most readely submit thy selfe to Obedience, for nothing is more acceptable to God then Obedience: and disobedience the thinge which God most hateth.

8 Content thy selfe with fewe and simple things, following the example of our Sauiour

Christ

Christ and his most blessed Mother, Delight neither in vaine apparell, nor glutteneus diet. But thinke with thy selfe, how unthankfull thou shouldest be, if thou shouldest murmur for thy meate, not being curiously dressed: considering our Saviour Jesus Christ, was offered for thy sake, most bitter gall and vineger to drinke. If thou want sometime even those things which are needfull for thee, yet ever honor God and put thy trust and confidence in him, who never forsaketh those that serue him, although for their greater good he suffer them somtime to want.

9 Love all men sincerely, as thy brothers, and sisters, representing the Image of God thy Creator: Hartily wish the good of all men. Shew to all men especially to thine enemies, and persecutors, a milde, and gentle countenance, and behaviour, and let all thy wordes be civill to them: suppressing in thy selfe all bitternesse of heart with a mildnes and sweetnesse of holy charity. Bee ever ready to comfort, and aide all men in necessity. Have pitty and compassion upon all in misery, reioyce at other mens vertues, as at thy owne: and take other mens miseries as the misery of thy selfe, imagining thou art subiect to as much as any other.

10 Contemne no man: banish from thy hart,

with

with all possible diligence, euill suspition, and rash iudgement. Inure thy selfe to thinke well of all men. Interpret with simplicity the sayings, and doings of others to the best. Preferre plainely all other men before thy selfe. Imagine thou art more vile, and ingrate, then any other man liuing. Say to thy selfe, say also to God, I am vnworthy to treade vpon the earth. Oh that thou diddest vnderstand how willingly thou oughtest vndertake all seruile workes for Gods sake: how gladly thou shouldest obey and serue other for him. For our Lord and Redeemer Iesus Christ, himselfe beeing made man, became a seruant, and with humility washed the feete of his Disciples.

11 Labour to please God, rather then men, and wish rather to be despised then honoured.

12 Feede and nourish in thy selfe holy and vertuous thoughtes, and euery where attende the presence of God, hauing thy thoughts continually fixed on him, whether thou feele sensible deuotion or no. These words following being oft thought vpon, will helpe greatly to recollect thy spirits, and reuerently to thinke on the presence of God. O Lord God, thou art euer present to aide and assist me: thou inhabitest and art abiding in the secrets of my soule.

13 What-

13. Whatsoeuer is not of God, regard it not nor think that it doth appertain to thee, so mayest thou with a quiet mind attend his seruice. And one thing is necessary: which to obtaine, thou must labor, endeuour, and doe what lyeth in thy power yet so that thou wholy distrust thy selfe, and al that thou canst doe, but haue all thy confidence in God alone, in his mercy and goodnesse, and in the helpe and assistance of his heauenly grace. For without God, thou canst do nothing but sinne. Reade ouer againe, and againe, these short rules, and examine thy life and behauiour by them.

AN INDEX OF THE CHAPters of this Dialogue, diuided into three parts.

THE first Chapter. *Desire* goeth on Pilgrimage.

2. He is instructed by spiritual Prelates.
3. Of the same Argument.
4. Of the house of *Humility*
5. How *Vain glorie* watcheth at the gates.
6. By what meanes we may attain to *Humility*.
7. Of the purpose of *Humility*, & her conference with *Desire*.
8. Humility continueth her discourse.
9. Humility still continueth her speech, & teacheth how to fight against sinne.
10. Of

10. Of concupiſcence of the fleſh.
11. Of concupiſcence of the eies, and pride of life.
12. How the other wicked Maydens may be ouercome.
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THE SECOND PART.

1. Of Patience.
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THE THIRD PART.

1. Of the probation and exercise of the loue of God.
2. Of the loue of our Neighbour.
3. Of the Loue of God and of our Neighbour, and of an other degree of loue, and of the function thereof.
4. Of

4. Of the same.
5. Of two other Purposes of the *Loue of God*, to wit, to desire nothing and to thinke vpon nothing.
6. Of the same, and of prayer also.
7. [illegible] office of the *Loue of God* in an other degree, and a continuation of that which he began of the maner of praying.
8. Of the third degree of Loue.
9. Of those things which the *Loue of God* hateth.
10. How the Loue of God brought desire into the house.
11. How Desire of God prepared Desire to eate of the fruit he gaue him.
12. How Desire learned to sing.
13. How Desire of God brought Desire into the chamber of his Lord and Master, and of the manner of praying.
14. How our Lord gaue Desire good directions, to gouerne himselfe well.
15. Desire exercised the foure words, which our Lord taught him, and what benefit hee reaped thereby.

FINIS.